THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

IN TEN BOOKS.

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TRANSLATED INTO PROSE,

After the Manner of the Rev. Mr. Hervey, Author of Meditations amongst the Tombs, &c.

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THE

PREFACE.

THere is not a single passage in history, sacred or profane, in which all the passions so much discover themselves, as in the HISTORY *of* JOSEPH. *Pride, envy, surprize, affection, fear, hope, and joy, are predominant in their turns, and must therefore engage the attention, and forceably strike the passions.*

Joseph was the youngest son of Jacob, and greatly beloved by him, to a degree that made his brethren imagine their father's love was stronger for him than for any of them: their minds being therefore soured with discontent, they looked upon him with the utmost disgust; and when he innocently told them that he had dreamed a dream, that they were all employed in the field about their harvest, when their sheaves fell down and made obeisance to his, they looked upon it both as an insult, and treachery, accusing him of having robbed them of

their father's favour. They also insinuated, that he expected to deprive them of their liberty, and that they should bow like slaves to him, though he was the youngest. This was far from his thoughts, when he innocently repeated this dream, not imagining it could ever raise so much obloquy and envy; and not being apprehensive of the bad consequences of the recital of the first part of his dream, he told them that having fallen asleep again, he dreamed that the sun, moon, and eleven stars, did obeisance to him. This raised their envy to such a pitch, that from this time they plotted his ruin, and were determined to sacrifice a life so obnoxious to their pride. This they determined should be in Dothan, a dark and remote place of the desart. Joseph coming with a message from his father, finds them there. They had resolved before to kill him, and after dipping his coat in the blood of a kid, carry it home to their father, telling him that some wild beast had devoured his son.

Reuben being more compassionate than the rest, expostulates with them on the cruelty of this, telling them of the unnaturalness of the crime; that it would be imbruing their hands in their innocent brother's blood, and not only so, but that it would be plunging a dagger into the heart of their venerable father, the author of their being; that notwithstanding any plausible story they might tell him, he would tear

his grey hairs, and beat his hoary bosom; and that it would fill his aged eyes with tears, and bring him down with sorrow to the grave; let us therefore, says he, cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and leave him. However, having left his unnatural brethren upon some occasion, they took the opportunity of his absence to sell Joseph to some travelling merchants; so that when he returned and found not his brother, he rent his cloaths in the utmost agony, saying, the child is not here, and whither shall I go? my dear, poor murdered brother, where shall I go to weep over thy lifeless body, and embrace thy cold limbs?

But now behold still a more distressful scene; how the venerable old patriarch mourns for his son! it is sufficient to make the most obdurate heart bleed, when he thus adresses his ungrateful children.

Yes, I perceive too well the cause of my son's death; some evil beast hath devoured him. Yes, my child, this was thy little coat of many colours, which the fondness of thy mother provided for thee; little did she think that it would be torn by the bloody teeth of a savage beast. This coat thy sorrowful brothers found in the desart, all torn and mangled as it is. Joseph is no more! I will go down into the grave to my son in mourning; there only my heart can forget its

ſorrows, and my aged eyes ſhall weep no longer.

To corroborate this ſhocking ſtory, they pretend with the utmoſt hypocriſy, to join him with their tears, and put on an appearance of pity. How can man be ſo deliberately bad! Wonder, O Heaven! and be aſtoniſhed, O Earth! at ſuch a piece of complicated villainy.

But behold Joſeph, whom providence directs, after the ſpace of about twenty years, becomes poſſeſſed of the higheſt honours of the moſt opulent kingdom in the world; and being inſpired by the ſpirit of immortal wiſdom, he is appointed prime miniſter of one of the firſt princes upon earth. The keys of the granary of the whole world are intruſted to him, and by this means God in this inſtance diſplayed in a moſt extraordinary manner his gracious purpoſes in behalf of ſuffering innocence, and made his divine pleaſure proſper in his hand.

And now the ſame over-ruling Power who led him ſafe to glory, through ſo many perils, is determined that he ſhall again ſee his brethren. The famine that prevailed over the world brings Joſeph's brethren down into Egypt to buy corn; Joſeph ſoon knew them, but ſpeaks to them in a boiſterous rough manner, ſaying, ſurely ye are ſpies; to ſee the nakedneſs of the land, ye are come: and as he inſiſted ſo much upon ſeeing Benjamin, it is likely he ſuſ-

pected that the youngeſt had ſhared the fate intended for himſelf. This put them into terrible confuſion, being afraid that they ſhould never prevail upon their aged father to part with Benjamin, his youngeſt and beloved Benjamin, to convince the miniſter of his being alive.

What! cried the venerable man, will you rob me of this child too? Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not, and will you rob me of this child alſo? all theſe things are againſt me.

Reuben now again generouſly interpoſes, ſaying, deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him again unto thee; if not, ſlay my two ſons.

The impatient father replies, his brother is dead, and if any thing ſhould befall him, and he die by the way, it will bring down my grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave.

However, neceſſity (which is ſtronger than all other human affections) at laſt prevails over Jacob; they are obliged to go into Egypt to buy corn, and the fond father gives up his darling child, his laſt hope and comfort. Upon preſenting Benjamin to Joſeph, he ſeems to be greatly moved, in ſuch a manner as not to be able to contain himſelf; when he ſaw him, his heart failed within him; the tears of fondneſs ſprung into his eyes, and he retired to indulge them. Upon this no doubt his heart was fil-

led with an overflowing gratitude to God for all his favours, and bringing him to see his relations again: and as God had shewed him great goodness, he determines to forget all the ill usage of his brethren, reveals himself to them, and orders them to return to their father, and take every convenience in the land of Egypt for conveying their father and all their families to Egypt. This History seems to display to all mankind, that in whatever circumstances they may be, still to remember that they are under the eye, kind direction, and almighty power, of a gracious Providence, who will at last make all things work together for their advantage, if they be the followers of that which is good.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK I.

A

ARGUMENT.

An invocation of the Divine Spirit. A deſcription of the temple of Moloch, in the valley of Hinnon, where a congreſs of infernal powers are met to contrive ſome method to extirpate the Hebrew race.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK I.

CELESTIAL muſe, who art often invoked to guide the immortal ſtrain on the bliſsful plain; the firſt-born ſons of light, inſpired by thee, in a tuneful flight hailed the creation; the ſpheres, pleaſed with thy voice,

began their round, and the morning ſtars danced to the charming muſic: yet thou haſt often deigned to leave the height of thy glorious habitation, to viſit ſinful mortals in their humble bowers.

The courtly ſwain of old, favoured by thee, told ſacred wonders beneath mount Horeb; of primæval light, and a boundleſs chaos, the ſprings of motion, and the ſeeds of light. The ſun ſtood ſtill, and gave particular attention, to hear the hiſtory of his radiant birth, and of the formation of the balanced earth; and the moon, ſhining with every twinkling ſtar, ſtaid to liſten. Lofty Sinai, and the hills around, heard by whoſe command their towering tops were at firſt raiſed. All the flowers attend, to be informed of their gay original, and

the groves adoring, bend their tufted crowns. The fountains and the ſtreams with-held their courſe, to hear the revelation of the wondrous ſource of the ocean; and on the branches the birds ſat ſilent. The flocks and herds neglect their paſture, and the ſwains gave over their labour, while he revealed to them in what manner their great fore-father ſprung from the duſt; how by a vital call he was at firſt awoke from the ground, and how the moving clay obeyed the almighty ſound. Thus the noble bard ſung in lofty ſtrains, and the heavens and the earth heard an account of their own formation.

But thou, propitious Muſe! didſt breathe a gentler fire, and tune the lyre to ſofter notes when royal Lebanon heard the amo-

rous king ſing the beauties of his loved Egyptian: a myſtic ſenſe is unfolded by the ſacred lays, and divine things were told in human types. O gentle power, do not diſdain to grace my ſong, while I trace the heavenly paths of juſtice, and twine a garland for the blooming youth, who is renowned for honour, and unblemiſhed veracity.

Let others tell of the conqueſt of antient kingdoms, and of the mighty deeds that have been done by favoured heroes; (heroes who were enſlaved to pride and every wild deſire,) a virgin theme requires a virgin Muſe; where guilty loves yield to ſtedfaſt virtue, and wanton beauty and vice quit the field.

JACOB, bleſt with heaven's peculiar favour, leaving the fertile regions of the Eaſt, travelled from Haran, a noble city, which ſtood between the fair Tigris and the Euphrates, and purſued his journey to his native land. His numerous camels, loaded with wealth, bore his wives and children, and an endleſs train of purchaſed ſlaves, with all his houſhold ſtuff; his numerous flocks and herds ſpread over the whole champain.

HIS fathers knew no other than the ſhepherd's trade, and his ſons purſue the ſame induſtrious life. He implored the ſame Almighty God at Bethel, that his pious anceſtors adored, and with grateful vows he reared an altar, where twice the radiant viſion had appeared. This was a

dreadful omen to all the powers of hell: thoſe divine things amazed the prieſts, and every demon trembled in his hollow ſhrine.

A FANE to Moloch ſtood in Hinnon's vale, and a conſecrated wood roſe around it, whoſe mingled ſhades excluded the noon-day light, and cauſed an uninterrupted night. In equal rows hung the pale tapers, and diſcloſed the manſion of the ſullen king; the horrid entrance is guarded by ſeven brazen gates; and nothing is heard within but the cry of infant ghoſts: polluted fires riſe on ſeven high altars, while the ruddy ſpires are fed by human victims. The place is called Gehenna, and perfectly reſembles the native gloom and diſmal vaults of hell. The goblins danced in the horrors of the night, the prieſt lay entran-

ced in frantic viſions, while the Pagan terrors ſat convened in ſolemn council, to debate on the means to be uſed to avert the ſtorm that impended over their ſtate. Reſentment fired the apoſtate princes, who were anxiouſly conſpiring black deſigns, to find out ſucceſsful ſchemes to cruſh the ſacred race, and efface great Heber's name; as they knew that it had been long predicted, that the infernal empire's deſtined foe ſhould ſpring from that line, who ſhould tread conqueror over their vanquiſhed race, and ſhould lead in triumph all their captive chiefs. This affair demands their deepeſt policy, therefore they are convened from the remoteſt lands; from Ur, Armenia, and Iberia's ſhores, from Nile, Ophir, and the Adrian and Atlantic oceans.

Nesroth first appears, his amber chariot drawn by snowy steeds; he whom the Syrian worships from his airy hills, at the rising dawn, whose vales the famed Araxis fills with wealth. Belus now forsakes his high frequented domes, and comes over the famous plains of Shinar: Plegor, to whom were paid libations for the dead, and other impious rights, descends his mount. Imperious Rimmon comes from his mansion on the fair banks of Pharphar's lucid flood. Osiris left his Nile, and thundering Baal the rock, from whence the plenteous waters of Arnon fall. Fair Mithra, the God of the East, with his yellow tresses and enchanting eyes, was there, imagining that dissembled beauty would disguise the fiend. Nor did the meeting fail of having a female deity, Astarte came with her silver crescent;

and Melita left her Babylonian bowers, where wanton damſels, decorated with bluſhing flowers, in all the various luſtre of gay ſummer, pay deteſted orgies to the goddeſs.

ALL theſe various powers propoſe their different ſchemes, but the aſſembly was pleaſed with none of them, till Mithra, who had an alluring mien above the reſt, aroſe, and addreſſed the apoſtate potentates after this manner.

MANKIND generally move to ruin by willing ſteps, and their own wild paſſions commonly prove their deſtruction; but the moſt fatal of all to them is forbidden love. Old Jacob has a daughter, young and fair, of whom he boaſts, and ſhe is the peculiar

care of fond Leah: the Pagans' hearts are inflamed by her bright eyes; young Sechem, who lately ſaw her with her virgin train wandering over the dewy plain, near Salem, felt her darts. I ſhall fill his youthful heart with mad deſire, to obtain his wiſhes either by fraud or force. To accompliſh his wiſhes, he prepares a feaſt for to-morrow, being inſtructed by me how to hide the ſnare: fair Dinah has promiſed to be his ſiſter's gueſt; impatient love will ſoon compleat the reſt of my ſcheme. The wrongs done to the damſel will ſoon inflame the brothers' rage, to be revenged on whom the Hebrews will attack with hoſtile arms; by which the Canaanites being provoked, ſhall join with us to aboliſh this deteſted line.

Moloch replies, revenge and bloody faction are my care; thine be the ſoft affair of love; thou canſt act thy part without inſtructions, as thou art well practiſed in the nice alluring art. Senac's conſcious ſhades, and the banks of the Euphrates, atteſt thy freedoms with the Aſſyrian maids: thy voice, that was applauded in the heavenly groves, was there devoted to terreſtrial loves: thy ſacred lyre, ſtrung to human ſubjects, no more rung with tireſome hallelujahs; thy hand was graced with this, a quiver hung behind, and thy ſparkling eyes never failed to charm the beauteous kind. The bold example of thy looſe amours prevailed on numbers of the heavenly hoſt; they who had vainly ſtood their firſt probation, were proof againſt ambition, and obſtinately good. It was thy friends who en-

larged the monarchy of hell, long after I, with my aſſociates, fell; you abhorred the ſkies on ſofter motives, being allured by the captivating eyes of women: the ſons of God were thus mingled with the race of men; hence the giant-ſtock began. Our plot requires us now to uſe our utmoſt efforts, and if it ſhould fail, the hated tribe I will aſſail in my turn; it is poſſible that domeſtic faction may at laſt prevail. We muſt by well-concerted means deſtroy Joſeph, the life and joy of his doating father. My fear is more excited by this youth, than any of the reſt; divine preſages appear in his face; the officious care of Gabriel, which is confined to him, foretels that he is a man deſigned for mighty things: his brethren, actuated by my powerful fire, ſhall all conſpire againſt his envied life.

When Joſeph is removed, the greateſt prop of old Jacob, the race ſhall all mourn their blaſted hope. Here Moloch ended; the infernal ſpirits roſe, greatly applauding the double plot.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Jacob's daughter dishonoured by Sechem, prince of the Hivites. Her brothers revenge the injury. The Patriarch relates to his sons Abram's conquest over the King of Elam and his royal confederates. He rescues Lot. Melchisedech meets and blesses Abraham. The intended sacrifice of Isaac.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK II.

YOUNG Sechem lay impatient all the night, and expected with eager eyes the break of day; he waits with ardent longings the promised hour, and fancies

that all his wiſhes are in his power: his friend Aner improves the fatal fire, and with flattering ſcenes ſooths his wild deſire.

SIDONIA, not knowing, and being guiltleſs of her brother's ſnares, makes great preparations to grace her lovely Hebrew gueſt; who now appears with her young companions, too innocent either for fears or nice reſerves. Her artleſs looks, neither timorous nor having too much aſſurance, but with eaſy charms, allured the Jebuſites: her guiltleſs face is painted with a roſy tincture, her eyes ſparkle with life, peculiar to her beauteous race, and dart immortal charms. Her ſnowy arms are decked with rich orient bracelets, at the ſame time that her native charms are improved by her faultleſs neck. The maid, fatally

betrayed to Hamor's palace, is entertained by the Hivite princeſs; where ſhe meets all the luxury of the Eaſt. Her thoughts admire the proud magnificence, the cuſtoms of the people, and their ſtrange dreſs, till the declining day, and modeſt rules, together with Leah's charge, forbid her longer to ſtay: but ah! too late ſhe finds herſelf betrayed; ſhe is now a loſt defenceleſs maid in Sechem's power, ſeduced by fraud, and conſtrained by brutal force; her nation ſtained, and her name diſhonoured.

He ſtrives to move the injured fair with tender ſighs to voluntary love; ſhe knew nothing but the ſtricteſt rules of chaſtity, and all that was due to her great deſcent; but what he fails to gain by gentle arts, his wild deſires obtain by violence.

THE hateful tidings of this ſoon reached her father's ears, which almoſt ſunk him to the ground: her brothers alſo are enraged, and conſult together how to avenge the affront; but keep their black deſign an impenetrable ſecret.

THE town conſumed the ſecond day in feaſts, and at night lay plunged in fearleſs riot. Before the dawn, the reſtleſs ſhepherds held each his ſword drawn ready for the horrid action, and like a riſing flood, ſurpriſed the city, raged through the ſtreets, and bathed their ſwords in blood. The Hebrews, pleaſed with this ſucceſs, ſprung on furiouſly, and forced the palace gate: fierce Simeon flew through the bright apartments, and flew both old and young, without diſtinction.

SECHEM, ſtill inſpired with reſtleſs paſſion, was retired with the charming Iſraelite, and was firſt found by mad inſulting Levi, who gave the deſperate wound, without ſo much as making a pauſe, ſaying, Curſt raviſher! take thy diſpatch for Hell; when immediately the bleeding victim fell down: his fatal miſtreſs, ſeized with horror, trembling with ſurpriſe, turns away her eyes. The ſwains upbraid her roving vanity, and convey the penitent to their tents. Their father being grieved, reproves them for the bloody fact; but Judah takes upon him thus to defend this bloody action.

SHOULD ſuch a vile uncircumciſed race as they defile the ſtock of Abram with lawleſs mixtures, and in our ſight conſtrain our wives and ſiſters; while we ſtand tame-

ly by, regardleſs of the ſhameful ſtain, ſcarcely ſo much as complaining of wrong? It was they who firſt broke human faith, and betrayed that hoſpitable truſt, which was committed to them; therefore our vengeance is no more than juſt.

Good Iſrael cries, never mingle ſuch juſtice with my fame, nor ſpot my guiltleſs name with blood! the realms around us, who reverence idol Gods, will hear with indignation of this black deed, and unite all their rage and policy, to blot out from the light our odious memory.

So Hell believed,——but Heaven ſpread a ſacred dread of the ſons of Jacob amongſt the nations; while he piouſly implores the great unutterable name at Bethel. From

thence he retires to Mamre's peaceful plains, where Kiriath-arba lifts her golden ſpires: it was illuſtrious Arba who built and gave the place a name; he was the boaſted father of the giant-race; by the plan it appeared as if it was deſigned for them; the threatning battlements were raiſed to Heaven; they live here in plenty, and careleſs joys, and give protection to the neighbouring ſwains.

A large venerable wood was beneath the hill where the city ſtood, the ſolemn ſhades of which begat a ſacred dread: in this wood was concealed a vaulted ſtructure for the dead, wrought with wondrous labour, called Machpelah. Abram bought this from the giant nation; the cave, the wood, the ſprings, and the bordering field, Ephron

their prince ſealed by publick contract.

The ſhepherds drive their fleecy charge to this place, and live unmoleſted; they frequently found here inſcriptions and old monuments: and wherever celeſtial viſions had appeared, the pious worſhipper had there erected an altar; the myſtic name, ſo long unknown to mortals, was deeply figured in the poliſhed ſtone, and it was eaſily perceived, by marks that were engraven on the arched rocks, that heavenly powers had there converſed with men.

A little remote from this ſtood the pillar ſet up by Abram, to retain the memory of the conqueſt he gained near Damaſcus; this Jacob frequently ſhewed to the concourſe of people that came around him.

THE Eaſtern government was now extended, and all on the banks of Jordan paid a yearly tribute: it was the king of Sodom who firſt contemned the yoke: Admah and Zeboim next broke the treaty. The royal Elamite was enraged at this, and engaged all the neighbouring kings, who were his allies: Arioch and mighty Tidal join their forces, and they make a compleat conqueſt. They overcome the Horims, and drive the Emims from their fortreſs.

THE adverſe princes aſſemble themſelves in the vale of Siddim; but ſcarcely had they begun the encounter, before they were put to flight: the troops of Sodom, a race of cowards, being unuſed to charge a foe, throw away their javelins, ſwords, and ſhields, and fly, ſome to the woods, ſome to

the caves, and ſome to the rocks, to ſave an inglorious life; while others plunge into Jordan, to hide their faces from the ſtern looks of war. The invaders ſheath their ſwords, and ſcorn to give ſuch a deſpicable race the honour of martial deaths. Bera and Lot only continued on the field of battle, but at laſt being preſſed by numbers, they were compelled to yield. Thoſe they took priſoners, and carried away, with all the riches of the place, to Paran's hills.

Abram hearing of this, raiſed his own domeſtic ſervants, being joined by Eſhcol, Aner, and Mamre, three brothers, ſprung from the noble Amor, all young and dauntleſs. At night, when the victor army lay ſecure, deſpiſing their foes, and fearleſs of ſurpriſe, by the command of Heaven, a ſud-

den vapour ſpreads over all the hoſt, and clouds their drowſy heads; ſoft ſlumber climbs to the high throne of their ſenſes, benumbs their limbs, and ſlackens their ſinews; the eyes of the captives alone repelled its force, and would not yield to the pleaſing violence.

The brave confederates now draw near the camp, and by the glimmering fires perfectly ſaw its poſture: the ſwift invaders ſoon ſlew the foremoſt rank, and the waking priſoners heard, and knew their active friends, who flew to their ſuccour. Abram untied his nephew, and he untied all the reſt; the ſleeping foe ſupplied the avenging ſwords: the fearleſs brothers paſs from file to file, and leave them breathleſs on the purple graſs. The old patriarch now feels

new life in every vein, and ſcatters wide deſtruction over the plain. The terror increaſes, the claſh of arms, and the cries of wounded men, afflict the ambient ſkies. Prince Arioch awakes, and is ſtartled at the noiſe, ſhakes off the fatal ſlumber from his eyes, and repeatedly calls his legions to arm, then madly haſtes to meet the loud tumult; but he is outdone by a ſtronger force, with eager ſteps running upon certain deſtruction; they quit the field, diſordered and amazed, and raving yield to their unknown victors.

By this time the morning dawned, and the ſun with a bluſh expoſed their inglorious flight; the joyful ſhepherds ſeize the abandoned ſpoils; they now return from their martial toils, when Abram is met by a

royal prieſt at Salem, who preſents him with a benediction, and greets the Hebrew bands: his mien was ſolemn, and his face divine, refulgent gems ſhining around his temples; his graceful robe was a bright celeſtial blue, which trailed behind, and drew a majeſtic train. Great Abram gives the tenth of all to the prieſt, and the kings and Amorites divide the reſt. All were pleaſed, and loudly praiſed the generous conqueror, raiſing a laſting column to his name. Now direct your eyes, ſaid Jacob, to yonder mountain, for there lies a ſcene of brighter glory. It was there that the wondering ſun viewed in Abram, the nobleſt height of human fortitude; when the pious man lay drowned in guiltleſs ſleep, this fatal ſound thundered through his ears.

Arise, lay Iſaac upon my altar, and with

thy own hand ſlay the deſtined victim; he ſtarts, and cries, who is it that can inſpire this thought? is it poſſible that Heaven can require ſo monſtrous a ſacrifice?

THIS dreadful call ſurprized his ears a ſecond time, and lo! the well-known heavenly form appears. He bowed, and aroſe at the purple dawn, going with his darling ſon to Moriah. Aſtoniſhed he ſtood long by the altar, then piled up the ſacred wood with his trembling hands; half dead himſelf, he binds the wondering youth, who now finds his ſire's ſevere intention. He aſked his father, what thoughts have poſſeſſed your ſoul? what horrid fury is it that fills your breaſt? am I deſigned a ſacrifice to Hell? ſome cruel dæmon muſt have blinded your reaſon. The unblemiſhed ſkies will

juſtly abhor this deed, for no human victims bleed upon their altars.

THE patriarch replied, it is Heaven that requires this fact; It is Heaven——I take yon ethereal fires to witneſs. Yet, victorious nations, as innumerable as the ſtars, and the myſtic king, muſt ſpring from thee: It is paſt relief——Yet he ſwore by himſelf, who can reſtore thy relics from the dead? almighty Power can ſurmount every obſtacle.

HAVING ſaid this, the pious youth reſigned his life; bleſt Abram ſhook off all paternal affection, and forward thruſt the conſecrated knife; when an angel broke from the ſkies like lightning, and warded the fatal ſtroke with his hand; at the ſame time

a voice came downward from Heaven, breathing beneficence and love.

I SWEAR by my great ſelf, to bleſs thy race with peculiar grace and endleſs favour; the ſpacious Eaſt ſhall be ruled by thy ſceptered ſons, while vanquiſhed kings ſhall be obedient, and pay tribute.

JACOB ended here, and retires to his tent; the parting ſwains again turning their attention towards their fleecy charge.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

The infernal powers endeavour to raiſe factions in Jacob's family. Joſeph's dreams. His brothers jealouſy and malice. He comes to Dothan. They confine him in a pit while they conſult his ruin. An Angel in a viſion preſages to him his future greatneſs, and warns him of the ſnares of beauty and unlawful love. His brothers ſpare his life, and ſell him to the Midian merchants travelling with their ſpicy traffic into Egypt. Jacob obſtinate in grief, refuſes all conſolation.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK III.

THE Pagan deities were now mightily displeased, to find that the public storm was so soon quieted; they became studious, to invent by new malicious ways to raise civil jars among the Hebrews: Moloch was already employed for this purpose, and having kindled mischief, threatens Joseph's life.

THIS lovely youth was the boasted son of fair Rachel; he was compleatly formed, and just entered into the seventeeth year of his age; his face was adorned with the blooming grace and sparkling eyes of his mother, mixed with a manly look. Not he who in Sabea's fragrant grove enflamed the queen of love, nor Narcissus, nor Hylas, ever looked so gay, as he, when the clear streams displayed his rosy blush.

SOMETHING noble shone in all his conduct, which seemed designed as a presage of greatness yet unknown. Visions had often foretold his rising fate, the last of which he unfolded to his father Jacob, when his brethren were present. When my eyes were closed in sleep, a field of ripe corn presents itself to my fancy; (the yellow crop still

appears to my thought!) my brothers reaped with me the bending ears; when each had with great induſtry bound up a ſingle ſheaf, theirs ſurround mine with a ſudden motion, and bow with proſtrate reverence to the ground. After this, when my mind was cleared of worldly baſeneſs, there appeared a wondrous ſun above my head; methought the moon and ſtars ſhone bright at higheſt noon, the ſun's ſuperior light not having power to conquer it; I ſaw the gaudy orbs deſcend, and bend with humble homage at my feet.

The ſhepherds with ſurprize hear his ſtory: proud Aſhur cries, with rage and threatening malice in his aſpect, muſt we be thy vaſſals?

JACOB and his favourite ſtay at Mamre, the reſt ſtray to Dothan's flowery meadows; their boſoms being all fired with infernal envy, their horrid thoughts inſpire black reſolves: at laſt Hell combined with the monſtrous treachery, and Joſeph's murder is reſolved on.

HIS father ſends him to Dothan, and now nothing but Heaven can prevent his ruin. Their now guiltleſs prey ſtands before them, without any defence but his inborn worth, and fearleſs innocence. Nothing alarmed his fears, but his brethren's crimes, and his father's hoary hairs.

THEY now prepare to give the fatal ſtroke, when Reuben's arts reprieve the hopeleſs youth, by adviſing them to let their brother

live. There yet remains a thouſand eaſy methods to render all his glorious projects vain; but till we have determined upon what methods to uſe, let us confine the aſpiring boy to yonder pit. They yield to his advice, and retire to their tents; the fiends below admiring their own ſucceſs.

The night now prevails, and draws her ſable train along the ethereal plain with ſilent pace. The dancing ſtars by fits exert their beams, and the ſilver creſcent glimmers on the waters. The ſluggiſh ſtream runs with a drowſy roar, and with a lingering motion; the peaceful echoes being undiſturbed with ſound, lay ſlumbering in all the caverned hills; both love and envy, frenzy and faction, ſlept, and all Nature kept a ſtill ſolemnity; it was only devotion that

waked, and directs the prisoner's pious vows and eyes to the skies: his winged petition flew to God's high throne, and Gabriel, one of the seven who in their appointed turns burn ambrosial incense before the throne, is sent on a commission by God.

A sudden day now returns on the night, and drives off all the stars; the shining guest, divinely drest in all his heavenly pomp, is received into the enlightened cave; he greets the youth, and after this manner acquaints him with his charge.

Thou must leave rich Jordan's shore tomorrow, and never trace Moriah's sacred hill any more; a great and grateful nation yet unknown to thee, shall be saved by thy care, and own thee for their patron: but let

thy breaſt prove impenetrable to forbidden love, and wanton beauty: this is enjoined thee by Heaven's high command. The wondering ſhepherd bowed himſelf, as expreſſing his obedience, when immediately the angel mounted on a radiant cloud to Heaven.

The morning now diſplayed her lovely face, and diſpelled the ſhade with a roſy ſmile. The faction roſe, and met in council, to determine what was to be the fate of Joſeph. They did not ſit long, before a train of camels, loaded with ſpices, and followed by Midian merchants, travelled by; the envious brothers now call, Heaven has marked out the way; whatever ambitious thoughts portend, we will baniſh all his hopes, by ſending him to a foreign land.

They ſtop the Midianites, and ſoon make an agreement, reſolving never to ſee his hated face again. He took his laſt farewell with tears, which perfectly told his inward anguiſh, ſaying, I am going to wander on ſome barbarous land, may the juſtice of Heaven never avenge your crime. O let my father's age make you indulgent, and aſſwage his grief, by giving him flattering hopes of my return.

They hear his complaints, and ſee the anguiſh of his ſoul, and can ſcarcely controul their ſtruggling pity. Touched with remorſe for this unnatural ſin, it makes them half repent; but their love is repreſſed by hate and envy, which prove their victor paſſions. However, to hide the deed from their old ſire, they form a ſpecious fraud, and

Joseph's Brethren dip his Coat in ye Blood of a Kid, to persuade their Father that he was slain by wild Beasts. Gen. 37. 31.

ſucceed in the plot. When they ſold their brother, they took off and retained his party-coloured coat, which they ſtained with a bleeding kid; treacherous Simeon goes with this to Mamre; the loſt old man knows this relic too well. After a diſmal pauſe, his ſorrow breaks out in a violent manner, and he utters the following language.

ALAS! my ſon! alas! thou haſt been the prey of ſome ſavage monſter! why have I lived to ſee this deteſted day? why have I lingered thus? I ſhould have died, when thy unhappy mother, my beſt beloved wife, left my ſide: but all my Rachel's face I could trace in thy reſemblance and features. Oh! how this tormenting thought afflicts me! Oh hide me from the light! the uſeleſs rays

of the ſun affect my feeble ſight: oh lead me to the ſolitary grave: deſpair and woe crave that dark retirement; when I am there ſtretched upon my duſty bed, I ſhall forget the toils of life, and mingle with the dead.

His friends attempt in vain to bring relief, and in vain perſuade him to deſiſt from inexorable grief. The diſorder lies deep, and is intermingled with his ſoul, neither time nor counſel being able to controul its force.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

A description of Egypt, with the pyramids. Joseph sold by the Midian merchants to a captain of the royal guards. He leads him to his palace. Shews his wife the handsome captive. Her growing passion for him. A young Assyrian maid endeavouring to amuse and divert her mistress, tells her the story of Ninus and Semiramis.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK IV.

IN the mean time, the captive travelled with his Midian maſters, through ſavage woods, and vaſt deſarts. At laſt they arrive at the pleaſant coaſt of rich Egypt, and perceive its level meads dreſt with immortal green. The fertile Nile directs his courſe between them, and nobly flows from his immortal ſource. Stately cities and aſpiring

groves ſtand along the borders of the ſacred flood: here antient Tanais appeared in her height, before the Theban wall had been reared by Amphion's lute.

The city of the ſun ſhone radiant with emboſſed roofs, and golden foliage, before ſkilful Vulcan was named at Lemnos, or had framed Cynthia's darts, or ſhields for Pallas.

On the Peluſian ſtrands, Anſana ſtands, crowned with ſilver turrets, which old tradition tells us was raiſed to his preſent height, by powerful magic, and is now ſecured by ſpells. The Egyptian wizards immure themſelves here, converſe with hell, and practiſe impure rites.

Now the ſight is ſurpriſed by mighty

pyramids, and on Mafre's plain the ſpiral towers ariſe. Redouſa, built by Saurid, is ſo lofty, that its head is here magnificently ſhrouded amongſt the ſurrounding clouds: its daring ſtructure ſtood the fury of the univerſal flood. Phacat and Samir's pointed tops aſcend, and their lengthening ſhades extend over the fields; their compaſs remains ſacred to the dead, and within there reigns ſilence and eternal night; they are never ſaluted with one lightſome ray from the ſun, but glaring lights, with ſickly gleams, depending from on high, ſupply the hollow ſpace. Antient kings lye embalmed here with wondrous coſt, which exempts them from corruption for a long courſe of years; ſome are placed ſitting, in artful figures, graced with idle enſigns, and fruitleſs pomp; while others lye ſtretched in ſleeping poſtures

on folding carpets of an imperial colour. Their hovering ghosts, pleased with this mimick pride, reside amongst the breathless carcases. Our Hebrew stranger, who had never beheld such things, was astonished at their outward bulk, though he was quite ignorant of what prodigious things were shown within.

And now the Midianites were arrived where Zoan's wall inclosed imperial towers; here they exposed their spices, and the young handsome slave, whose aspect spoke something divinely grand, something that had designed him for a better fate; his mind greatly composed far above his years, and grave.

The chief captain of Pharaoh's band ad-

mired much the graceful captive, and generouſly gave the Midianites their full demands. He finds a ſudden friendſhip ariſing in his breaſt, unknown to vulgar minds: ſome heavenly being had prepared him, and wrought this kind impreſſion on his heart.

POTIPHAR ſaid, young ſtranger, follow me, and be not diſcouraged; I have now ranſomed thee from ſervitude, and thou art free. The youth received this favour in ſuch a graceful manner, as fully anſwered all the expectations that had been raiſed by his outward appearance.

FRONTING the royal houſe, there ſtood a ſtructure, crowned with turrets, with palmy groves around it; they went together diſcourſing through the walks, both equally

pleaſed and content. Aſſoon as they had reached the houſe, the maſter called for a coſtly veſtment, in which he dreſſed the youth; he was now no more diſparaged with the attire of a ſlave; all admire his faultleſs ſhape and features. His hair, which was of the colour of the paleſt amber, in floating curls and ſhining waves, fell down from his crown. Young Paris diſplayed ſuch ſurpriſing charms, when firſt he was cloathed with gold and Tyrian ſilks; forgetting the ſwain, he laid his crook aſide, and bid adieu to Ida's flowery plain.

The captain then ſends for his wife, and ſhews her with boaſting joy his purchaſed friend.

The fair Sabrina, whom he had lately

made his bride, was great, celebrated, and proud of her beauty. Her eyes, which were black and large, ſparkled with a ſprightly fire, and inſpired love at every fatal glance. Her charming face ſhone with a ſwarthy luſtre, that diſgraced the full-blown lilly and the roſe. Her gloſſy hair far outſhone the blackneſs of the raven's wings, and hung round her neck in wanton ringlets. She took a careleſs view, with great affectation, and ſoon withdrew to her own apartment.

Joseph long remained beloved and happy, and gained ſucceſſive favours from his lord, who, now grown proſperous both at home and abroad, believes his gueſt to be ſome favourable deity: He gives him full command over his houſe, and intruſts him with all his treaſures. In the mean time

Sabrina feeds a ſecret fire within her breaſt, but ſhame ſuppreſſes its rage. When ſhe firſt beheld the eyes of the charming Hebrew, ſhe felt, but well diſſembled the ſurprize; but the languor of her penſive looks declare her inward care.

Cyrena, a Syrian maid, well born, who had been betrayed from her native coaſts, ſaw the change, but did not diſcern its reproachful cauſe. Her voice, her eaſy wit and eloquence, could eaſily hold in ſuſpenſe the wildeſt paſſion: ſhe often attended her miſtreſs on their uſual walk, which was to a grove, where with pleaſing tales ſhe endeavoured to charm her grief, and entertain her thoughts; nor did her art ſeldom fail to give a ſhort relief. The pleaſing ſubject ſhe uſually talked of was her own native clime,

the pomp of the Syrians, their cuſtoms, and their loves; and among the reſt of the famous queen Semiramis; and while they ſat repoſed beneath a ſpreading palm, Sabrina aſked her to relate her ſtory.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

The ſtory of Semiramis, expoſed, when an infant, in the fields; where ſhe is found (covered with a rich embroidered mantle) by a peaſant, who carries her to Simma, the chief of the king's ſhepherds, by whom ſhe is married to Menon, the principal commander of the Aſſyrian forces. Menon being called to the ſiege of Bactria, ſhe follows him in a martial diſguiſe. Menon diſcovers her ſex to the king, who marries her, after the death of Menon.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK V.

THE maid begins.——In that place of the world, where the famed Coaſpes waſhes the borders of rich Elam with his ſacred waves, the ſhepherds, who kept the king's unnumbered flocks, ſpread their tents along the fields.

THE ſilent dawn was yet grey and miſty,

and hoary moiſture lay on the mountains. With early haſte, a peaſant, being intent on his rural cares, paſſed by a rocky cavern; a bed made of moſs lay acroſs the path he was to go, over which was ſpread a rich embroidered mantle; when this was lifted up, a lovely child preſented itſelf, which ſmiled ſweeter than the roſy morning: this made the wondering ſwain forget his country affairs, and carry the infant back to Simma's houſe.

Simma, his maſter, though he was a wealthy, was a juſt man: he had both the royal lands and the flocks under his truſt; he had amaſſed great riches, but had not an heir, and ſeeing this child ſurpaſſing fair, he took her up, and bred her with the indulgent care of a parent. As ſhe grew up he

controuled her in nothing, and ſpared no coſt to pleaſe her boundleſs fancy.

When time had brought her to the perfect prime of beauty, her ſhape was faultleſs, and in all her mien were ſeen the preſaging marks of majeſty: never any mortal could before boaſt of ſo fair a face, ſuch radiant eyes, and ſo divine an air. Her beauteous temples were crowned with a flowery wreath, her crimſon girdle bound her ſnowy veſt: thus dreſſed, the gazing ſwains love and admire her, and with amorous zeal on their bended knees they preſent her with all the fragrant tribute of the ſpring. Thus ſhe walks over the plain, and is eſteemed a goddeſs.

Heroic Menon had a fair dwelling not

far diſtant from wealthy Simma's ſeat; his rank and early worth had gained him the high command of all the Aſſyrian force: this chief, whom all admired, had retired in peaceful times to prove a ſofter happineſs: it was here that Semiramis had fired his imagination. He viewed her heavenly face with tranſport, and made his court to Simma to obtain the glorious prize; proffering to bind his vows with ſacred rites. This favour greatly pleaſed the haughty virgin, and indeed ſhe had certainly denied his ſuit on meaner terms, guided with a noble virtue and pride. The lover finds ſucceſs, but all his joys are deſtroyed by a ſudden ſummons which he receives from the king.

Ninus hears the tidings of the revolt of Bactria, and prepares himſelf to meet the

Joseph's Master casts him into Prison on the Accusation of his Mistress. Gen. 39. 20.

foe in arms. Ungentle fate allows him only three ſhort days for his ſighs and parting vows, which makes him curſe his martial charge and public fame, and perfectly loaths the incumbrance of a glorious character, which rends him now from his charming wife, his loved Semiramis.

She is leſs ſurprized at hearing the king's command, and cries, pray, Menon, baniſh all your cares; we cannot, nay it is impoſſible for us to part; my heart is fired with heroic courage. I'll go through raging ſeas, burning deſarts, or perpetual ſnow, to follow you. When I am led by your example, I ſhall not fear either the flying arrow, or the pointed ſteel. Though I were pierced with a fatal dart, if my Menon were by, it would be a ſoft, an eaſy

thing, to die. I'll run with you, let the event be what it will, though it were to certain death, nor will I ſhun any danger. O thou radiant ſun! be witneſs to my vows. Nor can this adventurous deed ſtain my conduct; in a martial attire and threatening armour, I boldly can defy all other eyes; ſecure with you it ſhall always remain a ſecret.

The hero's heart is filled with new pleaſure, to find ſuch love, beauty, and ſteadfaſt virtue joined; he ſaid a thouſand tranſporting things to her, and made a thouſand vows of his laſting paſſion: then he ſent for a rich habiliment of war for her, and dreſſed himſelf the ſmiling fair.

On her head there glittered a coſtly hel-

met, on which a dove ſpread its ſilver pinions; a plume of the whiteſt feathers danced above this, which was moved by the leaſt trembling breath of air. The embroidered ſcarf that flowed over her armour, glowed with dazzling flames of ſcarlet and gold. With mimic pride her hands ſhook a javelin, and a painted quiver rattled by her ſide. Her warlike dreſs is adorned by her height and mien, and her charming eyes expreſs more vigorous rays. The courſer, with golden trappings, bounded through the croud, proud of his beauteous burden.

Menon, the grace and pride of Syrian arms, kept near the lovely maſquerader's ſide. The Babylonian force, drawn up in their ranks on Dura's plain, attend the

courſe of their mighty leader. While Ninus, as graceful as a martial God, rode exalted on his glittering chariot.

The Bactrians diſdain their approaching foes, and reſolve bravely to maintain their fortreſs, believing it ſecure from all acceſs: and often compelled the Armenian troops to fly; till bold Semiramis, who ſought danger, and had fought in the foremoſt ranks, obſerved a rock, which leaned over a caſtle. The Bactrians were careleſs to defend this, believing it ſecure from all acceſs: ſhe finds a path among the obſcure cliffs; then ſhe ſingles out a choſen band, and with great intrepidity gains the top, and ſoon obtains the unguarded fort. Their town being now made a prey to the fierce beſiegers, they gave the conqueſt of the day to her. All

praiſed the youth (for ſuch ſhe was believed to be) her bold addreſs had deceived each party; but Ninus admires her fortitude moſt, he views her blooming youth, and enquires particularly about her family.

Menon, loſt in dotage, with fooliſh pride no longer ſtrives to hide the ſecret; not imagining that this unlucky boaſt muſt coſt him the joy of all his future life. Ninus views her beauty with other eyes, and renews his gratitude in other terms.

He returns to Babylon, but conceals his flame, Menon's worth reſtraining him from this; with ſad reflexion, he knows what he owes to his ſword and council; theſe generous ties at firſt oppoſe his love, but nothing can reſtrain the increaſing rage; he yet

would endeavour to gain his ends by gentle means.

He ſaid to Menon, if I can procure my wiſhes, I will give thee both cities and a boundleſs ſtore of gold and precious jewels, and for a bride a blooming princeſs, allied to the crown; as I cannot live without Semiramis, I will give thee all this, and more to gain her love.

Menon, reſenting this, with a handſome pride, refuſed his offers, and denied his ſuit.

He now endeavours to obtain the ſofter ſex; but ſhe too with diſdain rejects his offer. What now do all the glories of the Eaſt avail him? Neither wealth nor empire

can procure his reſt. He becomes now tired with fruitleſs prayer and unheard ſighs, and is reſolved to try more rigorous means to eaſe his care; and thus threatens: either comply with my deſires, or ſoon prepare to ſee your hero die.

She hides this from Menon, who obſerves that ſhe appears leſs ſevere to the amorous king: his fondneſs grows with his jealous paſſion; he knows no lightſome interval of joy, and he can get no repoſe from the mingled frenzy.

He cries, can my fair enchanting wife be falſe, and can I yet protract this wretched life? This anxious heart, oppreſſed with hopeleſs grief, ſhall find perpetual reſt in death's cold ſhade. He ſaid, then plunged

the fatal weapon in his ſide, and defied all the hoſtile ſtars.

A LONG adieu! Semiramis, he cries, and expires with theſe loved accents on his lips; ſhe hears the parting groan, and flies to his ſuccour; ſhe obſerves her lover ſunk to the floor, and bleeding, he himſelf being the author of this barbarous deed; but being true to love, and the ſtricteſt rules of virtue, ſhe neither knew nor could ſuſpect the cauſe. She faints, and lies near the breathleſs carcaſe; her frighted women haſte to her reſcue, and at laſt wake the hateful ſpark of life; a hollow groan enſues; with feeble ſight ſhe meets the day, and loaths the flaſhing light. A ſtedfaſt ſorrow appears in her face, far above the ſoft relief that female tears give. She is ſilent as

death, her words can find no utterance, to tell the inward anguiſh of her mind: a rational, ſedate, and fixed deſpair, ſettled her air, and compoſed her looks.

In ſuch a ſlumber do the ſullen billows ſleep, and the gloomy deep wears the ſame ſmooth aſpect; while the treacherous winds refrain their gathering breath; a ſtrong preſage of a tempeſt on the troubled main.

The impatient prince attends with juſt reſpect her ebbing grief, and long ſuſpends his flame; and her ſtedfaſt thoughts prove long relentleſs to proferred love and empire: till fate at laſt induced her ſtubborn heart to take a crown, which was deſigned for her by all the ſtars, and fill a ſphere proportioned to her mind.

NINUS was now poſſeſſed of every wiſh, and bleſſed with ſovereign rule and brighter pleaſure; but alas! how ſhort has mortal joy to boaſt! what ſudden ſtorms deſtroy the flattering calm! what lawleſs power or human privilege can retard the appointed hour for one ſhort day?

THE ſtartled monarch in the midnight ſilence hears a warning voice thrice coming from the ground; thrice the frowning ſpectre of Menon's ghoſt ſtands, and ſeems to beckon with his airy hands. While haſty life retires from every part, a ſudden faintneſs ſeized his trembling heart; pale and ſpeechleſs, his eye-balls roll in death, while he yields up his breath with reluctant pangs.

THE mournful princeſs being juſt to his

merit, inters the royal duſt with wondrous pomp; ſhe placed his ſepulchre high on a mount, graced with marble ſpires and pointed arches. She bids a laſt farewell to the deceitful flame of love, and is reſolved to leave behind her a glorious name, in raiſing coſtly ſtructures to immortalize her memory.

She firſt built a lofty dome to Belus; the inward roof was gilt with dazzling ſilver; the god was faſhioned with art in a wondrous mould; his bulk was maſſy gold, and his ſacred utenſils were all of the ſame metal, while fragrant oils flame in golden ſockets.

She next with wondrous coſt built walls for old Babel, and called the ſpacious city

Babylon; it compaſſed an endleſs tract of ground, and was crowned with forts and battlements; it was ſurrounded with vallies, and levelled hills, where fronting ranks of palaces were ſeen, with ſtreams, and groves, and painted meads between them. The Euphrates divides the town, while his ſtately current glides through the midſt of it. A hundred gates open into the palace, out of which an hundred glittering chariots roll, which attend the queen's commands, when ſhe makes her progreſs through diſtant lands. Now reſolving to viſit the neighbouring Medes, ſhe leads her train over the lofty Sagris. At pompous Ecbatana now ſhe ſtaid, and diſplayed all her own magnificence. Her active mind was here employed on gay objects; ſhe deſigned gardens and ſeats of

pleaſure; luxurious nature combining with her art.

A large plain lay extended not far from this, gay with ſtately groves and flowery verdure; the pine, the ſpreading palm, and the cedar, join their mingled branches, to make a noble arch.

Semiramis with matchleſs labour turns an ancient river through this charming wood; the plenteous ſtream divides itſelf into various rills, while the chryſtal tides are confined within marble bounds. Myrtle, balm, and flowery caſſia grow in a grand row of marble baſons, all of one ſize. Prodigious entire rocks were brought hither, and ſmooth arches were wrought through their craggy ſides: here you may obſerve

the artificial hills rear their heads, and ſhady grottoes, to ſcreen the ſummer's heat, appear every where around. The valleys ſtand below in full bloom. The Syrian roſe, brought from far, glows here. Every thing that perfumes the bleſt Sabæan fields, grows in this delightful place, with every thing that ſacred Nyſa yields. The fragrant calamus, fir, cinnamon, frankincenſe, and weeping myrrh, here breathe out their different odours. Shrill birds ſing among the ſpicy branches; their warbling notes ring along the vallies: the winds and waters with a gentle noiſe echo every ſound.

After the queen had a while proved and enjoyed theſe diverſions, ſhe removed her court to Babylon: but ah! no height

of happineſs is free from the divine mandate; the princeſs finds the uſual force and vigour of her ſoul contracted by a ſwift decay of nature, which could not repell all its force, while Heaven and earth foretell the public change.

She enquires the event of this from the oracle, and the prieſts ſend her this pleaſing anſwer: that as ſhe drew her heavenly race from the gods, ſhe muſt ſhortly grace that immortal number with her preſence. Being pleaſed with the glories of her future ſtate, ſhe yields to her preſent fate without reluctance.

Here Cyrena ends her tale; the cloſing day began to withdraw its ſplendor, and forbid their ſtaying any longer there.

of happiness is free from the divine man-
date; the princess finds the vital force and
vigour either lost counteracted by a fatal de-
cay of nature, which could not repel all its
force, while Heaven and earth foretell the
public change.

She conceives the event of this from the
oracle, and the goddess lend her this pleasing
answer; that as the dove her lovely face
from vulgar gods, the mail thorny grace that
immortal number with her presence. The-
ing delighted with the thoughts of her future
fate, she yields to her prudent fate without
reluctance.

Hyas Cynthia ends her tale; the chilling
day began to withdraw its splendor, and for-
bid their tarrying any longer there.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

Joseph's mistress at last discovers her criminal passion to him, but is repulsed. She complains to her nurse, who vainly tries the force of spells. She is sent by her mistress to Harpinus. His cell described. He consults the planets, and flatters her with success, till finding the Hebrew youth inflexible to all her charms, she falsely accuses him to his master, by whom he is confined to a prison.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK VI.

SABRINA ſtill pines with impatient love, and now deſigns to diſcloſe the fatal truth; her indulgent hopes ſooth her to believe, that ſhe can trace a ſecret paſſion for her in the lovely Hebrew's face. When he thinks himſelf alone, he ſeems to bemoan ſome new misfortune in a foreign accent, and a tongue unknown to her. Her vani-

ty ſoon finds an explanation, and ſhe puts a flattering ſenſe upon every ſound. Being now forgetful of her fame, and nuptial vows, ſhe fondly betrays her guilty flame after this manner.

If yet my torments are unknown to thee, if thou art ſo inſenſible, that my ſighs have not ſhewn thee this myſtery, let my confeſſion now prove to thee the ſtrange exceſs and grandeur of my love; though I ſhould ſtill have ſuppreſt my wild deſire, had not thy eyes confeſt an equal flame.

He replied, let me be puniſhed with the laſt diſdain, if ever I harboured ſuch vain thoughts; I could never abuſe Sabrina's favour ſo much, nor ever once accuſed your virtue in my heart. Heaven forbid that I

ſhould be ſo perfidious, and offend my generous maſter; nay, I might call him my friend; let ſcandal ſink my name when I prove ſo unjuſt and falſe to ſo hoſpitable a truſt.

THUS he would conceal her ſhame and amorous phrenzy, and haſtily withdraws, without her leave. She threw her limbs careleſly on the couch, and with a thouſand tears curſt her folly; till Iphicle, her artful nurſe, makes her appearance, and preſſes her to know the cauſe of ſo much grief. At laſt ſhe draws the ſecret from her miſtreſs.

THE beldam cries, you wrong your own merit, for you have charms, and the youth a human heart. Your beauty might inſpire a ſavage heart, the coldeſt age would take

fire at the ſight of you. But where is the wonder that a baſhful boy ſhould be nice and coy at the firſt addreſs? there is not the leaſt doubt but that he loves and languiſhes as well as you do, but is afraid to purſue the ambitious motive: neither ſhall your utmoſt wiſhes want relief, for I have a draught that gives divine ſucceſs; it is Nepenthe, which immortals quaff above; it was thoſe ſacred drops that rewarded Chemis's love.

When Totis, by his death, left the full command of Meſraim in the hand of fair Charoba, the rich Gebirus came from Chaldea, cloathed in foreign pomp, to ſeek the royal dame. Chemis was one of his retinue, whoſe great beauty allured a goddeſs of the watry race. The young Chaldean

ſtood on the Nile's watry banks, when lo! Merina riſing from the flood; her chariot ſet with pearl, divides the wave, and glides along the ſilver ſtream. Her robes ſhine with pearl and ſparkln rubies, but her brighter eyes expreſs a diviner look. Never did the blooming day aſcend from her humid bed with a clearer ray. Her ſmiles could appeaſe the raging tempeſt, allay the winds, and calm the ſwelling ſeas. She leaves her liquid kingdoms and immortal loves, her coral groves and chryſtal vaults, and roves over the graſſy meads with Chemis; when ſhe parted with him, ſhe gave him this celeſtial ſpell, which procures every good, and repels every thing that is evil. My mother derives her line from this youth, and ſhe left me this divine gift, which was preſerved by her anceſtors with great care.

One ſingle heavenly drop of it ſhall baniſh your deſpair.

She vainly tries her flattering nurſe's charm, for Joſeph ſtill flies from her hated paſſion; but being obſtinate in her love, and bent upon gaining her ends, ſhe ſends Iphicle to famed Anſana.

Harpinus had there an uncouth dwelling, planted round with yew and mournful cyprus, whoſe ſhadows controul every pleaſing thought, and fill the ſoul with deep anxiety. The black fiends advance to this place in the dead of night, and dance the horned Serim through the darkneſs: they come hither from earth, air, and the briny deep, and keep nocturnal revels; they come from gloomy Acheruſia, from the ſea of Serbon,

and the foreſt of Birdene; from the ſerpent iſle, Ophiodes, and from Syrtes, where fantaſtic ſpectres roam; from Chabnus, and the wild Pſebarian peak, whoſe hoary cliffs break the clouds.

This curſt aſſembly conſume the nights here in helliſh banquets, and obſcene delights. The ſickening moon withholds her feeble light, and folds her argent horns in ſable clouds; the conſtellations quench their glimmering fire, and being frightened, retire to diſtant ſkies.

The necromancer dwells amidſt theſe horrors, in his echoing cell and winding vaults; when you paſs from room to room, the brazen doors reſound in the ſame manner that exploded thunder roars. The day

being excluded from thence, blue ſulphur burns in a thouſand urns, with frightful ſplendor. The wizard in this place employs his mighty ſpells, and tells a great many events by divination. He inſcribes on the ground myſtic figures, and mutters words of an unlawful ſound, which compel the ſhivering ghoſts from their tombs, and force them to reveal future ſecrets. He knew when the ſtars were either adverſe or benign; when they ſhine with malignant influence, or darting proſperous rays, incline to love.

The nurſe here obtained a pleaſing anſwer, and by this means ſuſtained Sabrina's drooping thoughts. Your love ſhall be crowned in three days, and every amorous ſtar ſhall prove propitious.

In the mean time Sabrina feeds her guilty flame, and now the appointed morning arrived; when ſhe in haſte ſends a meſſage for the favourite youth; and he attends with reluctance. She ſits ſilent: he ſtands long fixed at a formal diſtance, waiting her commands. Her eyes are ſtill fixed on Joſeph's beautiful face, in which you may trace a cloſe contempt and inward hatred; yet ſhe is deſperate to compleat her own diſgrace.

She cries, ungrateful youth! I find too well by theſe cold looks, thy unrelenting mind, thy unconquered pride, and ſavage temper, you would endeavour to hide by words of a ſacred import. Thou talkeſt of ſevere rules, and holy ties, and pretendeſt to fear ſome avenging God: but alas! can any God command cruelty, or maliciouſly

withſtand human bliſs? Such thoughts as theſe arraign the heavenly powers, efface their goodneſs, and ſtain their juſtice. Who was it that gave this amorous biaſs to the ſoul? Would they controul its generous principle? They made nature what it is; nor can they bind the freedom of the mind with ſervile laws. Were this our lot, the brutal kind, that unmoleſted rove through the foreſt, are happy; they are unconfined in their love, and licentious in their choice. Virtue is a meer imaginary thing; it may torment, but it can bring no pleaſure. Honour is nothing but precarious fame, an empty breath, for a fantaſtical character. Wilt thou ſtill deny my ſoft entreaties, and let me die unpitied? Conſent at leaſt to the enchanting joys of love, while pleaſure, with her tempting voice, calls thee: theſe fold-

ing curtains ſhall conceal our bliſs in ſuch a manner, that no intruding eye ſhall reveal our theft.

Deluded fair! the noble youth replies, could we deviſe ſome artful labyrinth to hide our ſin, and retire far from mortal ſight, and be involved in the moſt profound darkneſs, yet there we ſhould be expoſed to the unclouded view of heaven, and its vengeance would purſue our treachery; diſtinguiſhed plagues would ſoon expoſe our guilt, while you muſt loſe all the glory of your ſex. Your vows belong only to Potiphar, and you muſt wrong a tender lover in him. For me, where could I find a place to hide my hated face? could I be conſcious of ſo baſe a crime? No; rather let me deſcend through the yawning earth, than

offend the laws of God, and kindneſs of a friend. When I requite my maſter's endleſs favours with ſuch ingratitude, and when I ſtain my faith and ſpotleſs loyalty with ſo horrid and profane a thought, let me be ſtruck dead with wrathful lightning and raging thunderbolts; let ſhame and eternal execrations blaſt my hated name, and deſtroy my peace.

These words he ſpoke with ſuch an awful air, while celeſtial virtue ſparkled in his looks, that his haughty miſtreſs now gave up all her hopes; but ſhe felt a very different kind of a phrenzy ſeize her mind: aſſiſting fiends ſuggeſt the helliſh thought, and blot the tender paſſion from her breaſt. A crimſon ſcarf was looſely tied over his graceful ſhoulders with ornamental pride;

ſhe ſnatched this furiouſly from him, while he frees himſelf from her embrace, and haſtily quits the hated place.

She called aloud, and Cyrena hears her voice; and when ſhe entered, ſaw her well-diſſembled tears. She feigns a tale of proffered violence, and complains of the arrogance of the Hebrew, who, ſhe ſaid, alarmed at her repeated calls, had left his curſed deſign, and fled. His ſcarf confirmed the truth; her Lord returns, and her words beguile his eaſy faith. Being blinded with rage, he calls the injured youth, and thus upbraids him for his violated confidence.

How canſt thou, wretch, diſcover ſo baſe a mind? Thy undaunted air, and guiltleſs face, ſpeak thee to be ſteady and compleat

in hypocrisy; thou mighteſt cheat even a villain as cunning as thyſelf; no wonder then that thy profeſſed ſanctity ſhould impoſe on my honeſt artleſs mind. I reſigned my ſoul and every thing elſe to thee, except my bed; therefore tye the ungrateful ſlave, and let ſome gloomy dungeon hide the monſter.

He ſaid, I can defy chains and dungeons, but would rather die than be curſt with thy diſpleaſure. My fate is ſadly aggravated by this dreadful reflexion: how ſhall I bear the hatred of my generous maſter? Oh ſtay! and at leaſt hear my vindication, while I ſwear by the Unutterable Name, my thoughts are all clear from this injuſtice.

He ceaſed, and ſtill conceals Sabrina's ſhame, nor reveals her fraud by one accuſing word. Now he is conveyed to a damp unwholeſome vault, and laid in ignominious chains.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK VII.

ARGUMENT.

An angel visits Joseph in prison, and in a prophetic vision shews him his own advancement, and the future fate of his father's posterity, their bondage and miraculous deliverance. The keeper of the ward convinced of Joseph's innocence, treats him with great esteem. The dreams of his fellow prisoners; and Joseph's interpretation.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK VII.

IT was night, and the ſolemn hour was advanced; when the keeper of the priſon aſtoniſhed ſees; from his tower, a form divinely bright, with ſtreaming ſplendor, ſmile through the ſhades, and diſſipate the night, winging its way, and enter the place where the new priſoner lay.

He cries, ſome God, who defends innocence, ſome God deſcends in that propitious light. Whatever the fact may be that is alledged againſt this ſtranger, he is certainly free from guilt.

The ſacred viſion appears to the youth, and chears his ſpirits with celeſtial fragrance. His heavenly ſmiles would even controul deſpair, and fill the ſoul with immortal rapture. A fair tiara crowned his youthful brows, and a folding zone, highly embroidered with Amaranthus, bound his gaudy veſtments. The Arabian phœnix never wore ſuch wings, ſprinkled with gold, and ſhaded over with purple. His aſpect, and addreſs, are full of beneficence, and his lips expreſs ſuch ſeraphic harmony, as might ſtay even the invading ſleep of death, while he

utters these soft words from his balmy mouth.

I COME from the unclouded realms of day above, from unbounded love and endless pleasures, from painted fields, dressed with immortal flowers, from ethereal air, and blissful vallies, commissioned by peculiar grace, with great presages to thy posterity.

THUS Gabriel spoke, and the pious Hebrew's breast confest the divine power and prophetic flame: an awful silence and profound suspence, perfectly closed all the tumultuous avenues of his understanding; the heavenly trance confined each wandering thought, collecting all the operations of the mind, while Gabriel unfolds to him what was to happen.

Being raiſed to high dominion, all his brethren fall proſtrate before him; his joyful eyes ſee his father before him, and he takes his bleſſing from him on his bended knees. Jacob's ſons are increaſed in vaſt numbers, and greatly diſtreſſed like poor vaſſals by the Egyptians, and oppreſſed by the yoke of a royal tyrant. To Heaven they cry; Heaven hears them, and their potent prayer prevails.

By divine command, a mighty prophet ſtands up boldly before the raging monarch, and brings in his hand his great credentials; he throws his wondrous rod on the ground, which is transformed into a moving ſerpent, that unfolds his ſpeckled train, and flows over the pavement. A dazzling train of

miracles next follow; which prove the prophet and his miſſion to be true.

His powerful word converts the ſprings, the ſtanding lakes, and the running floods into reeking blood; the verdant ſhore is ſtained by the wounded billows, which advance but ſlowly, and make a mournful roar. Infernal night now extends her ſable wings; the ſeer denounces plagues on man and beaſt; contagious torments infeſt the air; he bids with a loud voice the ſudden tempeſt to ariſe; the obedient ſtorm flies on rapid wings; blue lightnings flaſh, and dreadful thunders roll, and the extending ſkies are rent from one end to the other.

Notwithstanding this, the obdurate king does not revere the God of Heaven,

though every element fears him, and is obſequious to his command; till vengeful ſtrokes of power, which he is obliged to confeſs divine, ſhine with clear, yet terrible conviction.

The night was covered with unuſual dread, while every ſtar ſhed malignant influence. The pale ſpectres roam through the ſtreets of Zoan, and amazing echoes come from the ſepulchres; while the fatal angel, like a flaming meteor, flies with ſpeed down the ſkies. Reluctant juſtice, with a ſevere grace, ſits in his looks, and triumphs in his air. His awful brows are ſhaded by a creſted helmet; his military veſture flows behind him, and glows like an evening's ruddy meteor.

He grasps his sword and unsheaths it; terror, destruction, and death wait upon him: the stroke that he gives is mortal, though the wound be invisible; while mingled sighs and dying groans every where resound. The dreadful rumour runs from house to house, while wretched fathers mourn their first-born sons.

At day-break, the alarmed Egyptians hurry the sacred multitude away: but Pharaoh soon renews his daring sin, and blaspheming loudly, pursues the rescued slaves; the fearful tribes in great distress, stand trembling on the shore, a raging sea just before, and the cruel foe pressing hard behind them.

Their glorious chief now again extends

his powerful wand, and from the ſtrand gives the mighty ſignal; the waves obey the ſign, and parting, croud back the diſtant ſurges; they riſe like cryſtal hills on either ſide, while a ſtupendous valley lies between them. The grateful Hebrews paſs with joyful ſhouts, and the hardened foe does not decline the chaſe; till by the command of Heaven the watry chain diſſolves, and buries their pride in the overwhelming deep. While Iſrael take their way through the deſart, led by a cloud, which marches before them, and with a lambent flame, and unexampled light by night, chears the encamping hoſt.

The ſacred tribes are now commanded to remain in the place where the mountain Sinai ſhades the neighbouring plain; they

are here prepared with myſtic rites to hear with reverence God their Saviour pronounce their future law. The mountain is guarded with cloſe bounds, that none might raſhly touch the hallowed mount.

The appointed morning riſes with reluctance, and the ſkies around glow with fiery ſplendors; when God deſcends from the ethereal ſummit, the ſtarry convex bends beneath his feet: majeſtic darkneſs hides his radiant form, while he rides on the rapid wings of a tempeſt. The trembling earth owns his awful preſence, the cleaving deſart groans, and the foreſt flames; every river calls back his wandering current, which ruſhing down, falls into the ſubterranean caves, and as if affrighted, lies ſilent, and each ſandy channel is diſcloſed.

The antient mountains ſink their ſtately tops, and would be glad to ſhrink their fearful heads to a level with the valleys, and hide them beneath the waves in their primæval beds. Even old Sinai quakes at the tremendous weight, that with awful feet preſſed his cloudy height; prodigious lightnings broke from the darkneſs, obſcured with blackeſt ſhades and curling ſmoke; while raging thunders fly all around, the ethereal trumpet ſounding loud and high, and waxing ſtronger and ſtronger.

The pious nation bend low, and adoring, attend to the ſolemn voice of God. All the reſt is inimitable, and not to be expreſſed, and therefore the angel ſhifts the ſcene, and leaves it.

He next paints the curtained tabernacle, and the pavilion, with the moſt gay and beautiful colours; the attending prieſts cloathed in all their ſacred pomp, and inſtituted veſts; then brings the favoured tribes to the banks of Jordan, and ſhews them all the well-known bordering landſkip.

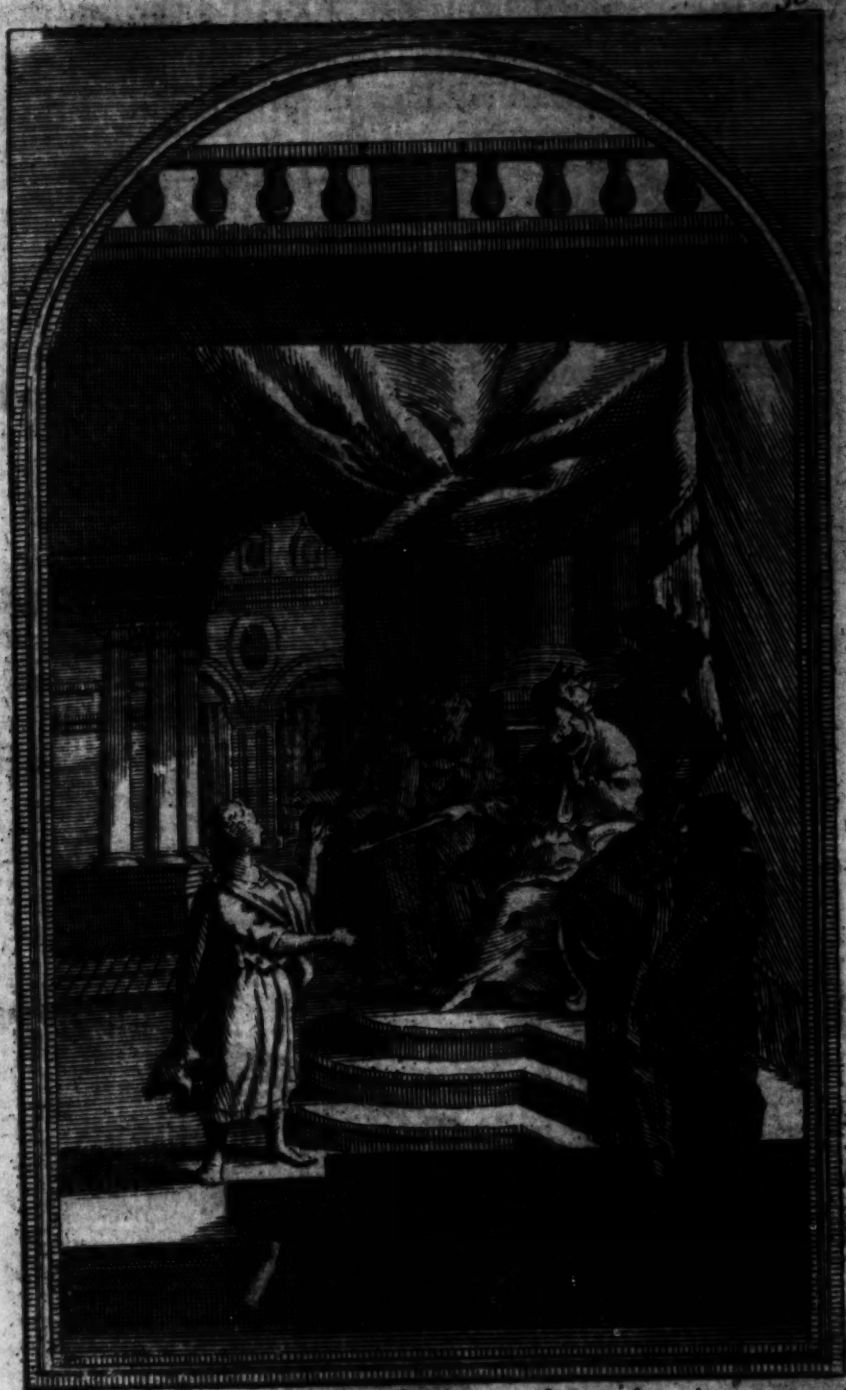
The warlike ſons of Jacob now obtain an airy conqueſt on Bethoron's plain; a glorious leader ſtands before the troops, and with a painted javelin balanced in his hands, he thus boldly commands the rolling orbs.

Thou ſun! ſtay with lingering beams on lofty Gibeah, to lengthen out this victorious day; and retard thy haſty flight,

thou fair morn! and at night gild the vales of Ajalon.

THIS said, they purſue the flying army, and eaſily overthrow all the Amorean kings. Now having made an entire conqueſt of the promiſed land, they ſpread their peaceful dwellings round Moriah's head.

BUT the pleaſing viſion flies with the night; and after Gabriel had unſealed the youthful prophet's eyes, he releaſed his ſenſes from the heavenly trance, when all the ſacred agitation ceaſed. The thoughtful keeper deſcends early to the vault, and brings up the injured priſoner, paying a juſt regard to him, and treats him with



Joseph being sent for out of Prison, interprets Pharaoh's Dream. Gen. 41. 15.

kindneſs, giving him all the freedom of the ward.

Two of Pharaoh's ſervants were detained here, the ſteward, who commanded his table, and the cup-bearer, who filled the royal cup with wine; they were both ſuſpected as traitors in deſign. Joſeph ſoon obſerving their dejected air, and heavy eyes, enquires the cauſe with a friendly care, which they both freely reveal to him, and tell him of the myſterious dreams they had had the paſt night. The butler begins:

METHOUGHT a goodly vine, with three waving branches, ſhining with purple grapes, grew up unpropped; they gently inclined towards my hand, and without

controul I preſſed the tempting fruit, and then gave the flowing bowl into Pharaoh's hand.

The next begins: Three caniſters, full of luxurious meat and royal viands, oppreſſed my drooping head, while birds of prey, with direful croakings, ſnatched away all the food.

The Hebrew ſaid, Unhappy man! thy dream was ſent from God, and portends every thing that is wretched: thy doom will be pronounced in three days, when thou ſhalt become a prey to vultures.

Then with a joyful ſound he pronounces to the firſt, Before two days are ended, thou ſhalt be crowned with thy former ho-

hours; but when thou art raiſed again to be triumphant in thy proſperous ſtate, kindly remember my forlorn condition, who am kept here by the blackeſt falſhood: to which the man made him a courtier's promiſe.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

Joseph's mistress languishes in sorrow and remorse for her treachery; which she confesses in the agonies of death. Pharaoh's prophetic dreams interpreted by Joseph. His grandeur and marriage with the daughter of an Egyptian priest.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK VIII.

BUT now Sabrina's guilty fire returns upon her with double force, and her bosom burns with raging passion; she relents with a female tenderness, and repents of all her former cruelty. The captive accused by her lies in chains, for whom she now languishes and dies. Tormented, and enraged, she often curst her pride, folly,

and revengeful luſt. A deep remorſe now ſeizes her, being conſcious of her ſin; her ſoul is vexed with conſtant horrors; her thoughts feel ten thouſand racking torments, yet ſhe ſtill continues obdurate in her treacherous crime. Her life and youthful ſpirits melt away, and her beauty preſently withers: ſhe wildly raves all day, and conſumes the night in imagined fright and thoughtleſs watchings; in the mean time airy terrors glide before her ſight; pale ghoſts, with wide diſtorted eye-balls, ſtare upon her, and burning ſpectres glare through the darkneſs. Till forced by fate, and more intenſe torments, ſhe now, to vindicate ſuſpected innocence, tells the hidden truth to Potiphar, and reveals all the faithleſs myſtery.

And now ſhe cries, Inſulting death comes, and perpetual darkneſs ſwims before my eyes. If there are Gods that regard human things, my monſtrous crimes will certainly meet a juſt reward. O ſacred Virtue! I ſtart at thine awful name, and diſclaim all my former thoughts; for thou art no empty fantaſtic perſonage; it is only from thee that unmingled pleaſures ſpring. Were I miſtreſs of the whole world, I would give it all to retrieve my firſt unblemiſhed honour: but this is a vain wiſh; for I am now going to ſome dark and uncomfortable coaſt, to ſome of the ſtrange realms below.

After ſhe had ſpoken thus, ſhe was ſeized with the pangs of death, and with lingering agonies gaſping died: while Joſeph

was forgotten by the courtier, till Providence brought about the period in which he was to regain his freedom.

The Egyptian monarch rose with the morning from troubled visions, and a short repose. He summons every planetary priest, to explain the different omens in his breast; the various orders which belong to the several stars were soon assembled, a most surprising throng; their looks were sullen, and their different vestments were varied; a wild devotion was expressed through the whole.

One wore a leaden-coloured mantle, which trailing behind, drew a sweeping length, strangely figured over with poppies, aconite, hellebore, mandrake, and

nightſhade; and the foldings of this monſtrous ornament was bound about by a treble twiſt of ſerpents.

WITH ſome of them a verdant foreſt ſeemed to move, their flowing robes being wove with palmy branches. Some were dreſſed in garments whereon panthers, bears, and every other ſavage beaſt were expreſſed in the moſt lively colours.

OTHERS were dreſſed in garments whereon were painted eagles ſpreading their wings; on others robes the hieroglyphic wings of the oſtrich were depicted; while others wore a painted crocodile, and all the monſtrous progeny of the river Nile.

NASAR, a youth vowed to the morning

ſtar, had his hair adorned with budding roſes. His raiment, which was of an ineſtimable coſt, glittered with pearl, overſpread with landſkips wrought in miniature, and ſurpriſing ſcenes, that raviſh and allure the ſight: clear fountains, myrtle groves, and flowery walks, peacocks with gaudy trains, and ſhining doves.

The Prince relates his dreams with looks of the utmoſt anxiety; the doubtful ſages ſearch all their heavenly ſchemes: but their ſtars were all mute, and the meaning is ſtill enveloped in obſcure diſguiſe and trackleſs darkneſs.

The King's cup-bearer now began to reflect on his paſt danger, and the baſe neglect that he had been guilty of; he there-

fore thus addreſſed the King: O Pharaoh! I muſt confeſs thy bounty, and my own guilt. When I and my fellow criminal were detained by thy juſtice in the ward, a Hebrew youth, who was then unjuſtly confined, from nightly omens, which greatly perplexed our minds, with the cleareſt preciſion unfolded our lots, and foretold my honour, and the ſteward's doom. Amidſt the night's ſolemn darkneſs, his cell uſed to glitter with ethereal light; for being highly favoured by the immortal Gods, they left their bright abodes to viſit him.

They then unfettered Joſeph, and brought him from the priſon, who being inſpired by Heaven, ſtands before the King. He thus repeats his dream: Methought I ſtood on the fair borders of our ſacred ri-

ver; and while I ſurveyed with great curioſity the ſpreading ſtream, ſeven bulky oxen came out of it, fat and well favoured; and they proudly ranged over the verdant mead, and fed on the paſture: when behold the ſame number came alſo out of the river, of ſour aſpect, ill favoured, and meagre, who devoured the firſt. The ſcene was changed, when ſpringing in my walk, one bending ſtalk of corn appears, containing ſeven blades, quite full and ripened; when lo! a ſecond rears his blaſted head, with ſeven unripened ears: this ſwallowed up the plenty that was on the fruitful ears, in the ſame manner that the lean oxen did the fat ones. When I awoke, I was oppreſſed with great anxiety, and earneſtly addreſſed every God, to know the meaning.

Joseph in Prison interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh's chief Butler & Baker. Gen. 40. 8.

THE youthful prophet makes answer, The Almighty God, who is supreme over the earth and the skies, has sent this dream unto Pharoah, to discover future things, and what changes it is his pleasure to bring upon the world. The sacred vision came with one intention, the hidden meaning of both is the same.

THERE will now begin seven plenteous years, and they shall take their joyful round, and the fields shall be crowned with boundless harvests; after them seven years of famine shall arise, which shall devour all that the seven prosperous years have brought, and leave not the least remnant of the former store. But heaven has commissioned me to give your Majesty this counsel, that you should give instructions

that all wasteful luxury be restrained, and that you ordain wise intendants through your whole realm: let them provide against the threatning ill, lay up corn, and preside over the stores.

The Prince replies, this youth has been sent to prevent our ruin: then commands them to bring an imperial vestment, and draws a costly ring from his finger, saying, This shall be a sacred pledge of those bright honours I reserve for thee. I resign my power and my kingdom to thee, the sovereign title only shall be mine; for thou art our guardian God, and our great preserver.

The King then ordains that his second chariot should be prepared, with white

Joseph made Governer over Egypt, and rides in Pharaoh's Second Chariot Gen. 41. V. 42.

ſteeds, and ſcarlet reins, and golden bits in their mouths; ſuch ſpirited horſes as would ſpurn the duſty ground with their airy feet, to draw him in triumph. They place the youth on high with princely pomp, graced with regal enſigns, and marks of power. Gay heralds proclaim before him, and bow the knee; and as he paſſes by, the croud adore him: but the royal favours are not confined to this, great Pharaoh's daughter is deſigned for his bride.

The night had twice reigned in ſable triumph, and the light had a ſecond time gained its circling empire; when Joſeph from his high apartment ſees through the waving trees a lofty temple, vowed to Iſis: from the gilded dome he beheld a beauteous virgin come, with whom he is quite

ravifhed. Her face is improved by an artlefs modefty, an elegant referve, and matchlefs grace; a rofy tincture appears in her cheeks, lively as that which the blooming morning wears; her eyes were of a fprightly blue; her hair was long, and hung difheveled, fair as threads of filver. Her well-fhaped neck and flender wrifts were adorned with ftrings of jet and pearl. Her robes were heavenly azure, fprinkled over with ftars, and fhe wore a crefcent on her breaft.

The wounded Hebrew fighed for the virgin, and felt a growing paffion yet untried: her lovely image, impreffed on his mind, had fixed her empire in his yielding breaft. But oh! how was his foul invaded with anguifh, when he was told that the

enchanting lovely maid was a virgin princeſs, who devoutly bowed at the holy ſhrine of Iſis! This, he cried, muſt confound all my hopes; my wound is incurable, and my grief is helpleſs.

In the mean time the ſtory gains ground, that he muſt eſpouſe the Egyptian Princeſs. It gives him great pain and diſtreſs to hear the ſpreading news, and he dreads the offer, which he muſt refuſe, or abuſe the imperial maid with diſſembled vows: Aſenah's power (ſo the prieſteſs was called) would admit of no rival flame in his breaſt.

The royal maid proved no leſs unhappy, as ſhe had long loved illuſtrious Orramel, an Ethiopian Prince, whoſe ſhape, and faultleſs face, exceeded all the tawny breed.

His features were nobly turned, and his piercing eyes ſparkled like ſtars amongſt the gloomy ſkies; they at once both engaged and dazzled the ſight with awful luſtre. His yielding hair, as black as a midnight cloud, waves to the gentle air in eaſy curls.

The Princeſs labours to prevent her father's purpoſe, and is pained with a ſecret diſcontent; the King obſtructs her young deſires in vain, but firſt enquires the pleaſure of the Gods.

Just Potiphera, a prieſt of unblemiſhed character, had ſincere piety, but it was ill addreſſed. He invokes Oſiris by the monarch's commands, while fragrant incenſe ſmokes round the temple. The fiends be-

ing in hopes of croſſing the great deſign, and awful will of divine Providence, under very ſevere penalties forbid the King's intention, in order to prevent the Hebrew's further greatneſs: then they named the fair Aſenah for his bride, and thus blindly complied with eternal fate: by this means effecting the predeſtinated ends of Heaven, while envious Hell intends nothing but Joſeph's ruin; not doubting but that the young idolatreſs would prove a ſnare to him, and ſoon ſeduce him with her love.

The prieſt trembling ſtands near the altar, and dreads the ſacrilege that God commands. He cries, Is it poſſible that my daughter can be named, who is vowed to Iſis in myſtic rites, which can never be reverſed? The Gods pronounce it fit, there-

fore it muſt be ſo! Both the prieſt and the king muſt acquieſce.

THE maid leaves the holy ſhrine with reluctance, but yields obedience to the divine powers. The youth regards it as the gift of Heaven, which crowns bright virtue, and rewards ſacred truth.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

The seven plenteous years; with the ensuing years of scarcity. Joseph's character as regent over the land of Egypt. Jacob distrest with the famine, sends his sons thither for corn. Joseph discovers his brethren, but is unknown to them: pretends to suspect them as public spies, and keeps them three days in prison; at last sends them back, with a charge to bring their younger brother with them, and detains Simeon as an hostage till their return.

Joseph lays up Corn without measure during the Seven Years of Plenty.
Gen. 41. v. 49.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK IX.

THE jocund years crowned with smiling plenty now advanced their round in shining circles; and the reaper's toil is rewarded by unbounded crops. The banks of the Nile are rendered pleasant, by the pleasures which chear the hearts of the rustics. The Hebrew, lately advanced by the King's grace, fills his post with splendor

and dignity; being ſtill watchful for the public good, he with care reſtrains exceſs by ſevere penalties; and amidſt the height of plenty in the land, juſtice, truth, and temperate virtue reigned: and in all the calm ſerenity of peace, the grateful people bleſs him for his prudent ſway.

But the ſmiling years had ſoon run their period, and a gloomy æra now begun its courſe: pale Famine comes with her malignant train, dries up all the ſprings, and taints the fertile plain: the trees, flowers, and balmy plants pine at the roots, for want of vital humour. No pearly moiſture lies upon the meadows, nor any gentle breezes riſe to fan the air. No cooling dews are ſhed from the languid moon, to chear the thirſty earth, but a ſcorching day is ſuc-

ceeded by a ſultry night; while the fiery clouds diſplay diſmal ſigns.

Nor is it Egypt alone that mourns over her blaſted grounds: pale Famine ſtalks through all the regions round about: Moriah's plain, and the flowery hill of Hermon, feel the hot contagion, and are bare and withered: even that fertile climate, which by peculiar grace was deſigned for the future race of Abraham, where the Pagan princes bore imperial ſway, being gay with long peace and fatal plenty, their crimes not being yet full:——While Jacob ſojourned here, a ſtranger, as all his forefathers were, he ſhares with others the common fate; he is preſſed with famine, and greatly diſtreſſed for his numerous family. Being led by the conduct of heaven, he

ſends his ſons to the plentiful granaries of Egypt for bread: the wants of their houſehold require the utmoſt haſte, and at laſt they reach the regal towers of Zoan.

PHARAOH's palace now vied in wealth and grandeur with ſoft Aſſyria. The riſing favourite grew every day more honoured, his royal maſter knowing no bounds to his kindneſs: his graceful perſon was charming to the ſight, majeſtic, and yet more mild than morning light: every tongue is employed on his virtues, he becomes the people's boaſt and joy. All private views were unknown to his ſoul, he conſidered the welfare of the kingdom as his own: he by his power redreſſes the wrongs of the oppreſſed, guards the orphan, and ſuccours the needy: his fame

flies abroad through the different countries, while Egypt calls him her guardian God. His officers attend with great assiduity, and receive the numerous convoys of the neighbouring states: who implore from his abundant store the food of life for their pining race.

The Hebrew swains are amongst the foremost of the suppliant croud, and bow with the lowest submission. He views with a stern regard the face of every one of his kindred, the sight of whom renews the memory of their late detested behaviour; their unhuman rage, and parting malice, engage his swelling thoughts to a just revenge. He stands long silent in a gloomy pause, but at last demands their country, their name, and their business.

JUDAH replies, with a modeſt grace, My lord, thy ſervants are all Hebrews: twelve brethren, lately the boaſt of a joyful father, till one was loſt by ſome unhappy chance; the youngeſt remains with his aged ſire, to ſuſtain his drooping life. We come to purchaſe corn, to ſave from lingering death our infant race.

HE replied with a ſtern look, Your very tale betrays you, and ſhews that you are falſe. By the ſacred life of Pharaoh, you are ſpies: then while reſentment burns in his boſom, he turns to the guards, ſaying, Let theſe men be retained in cloſe confinement, till we have gained ſome knowledge of their plot.

THE conſcious Hebrews look at each o-

Joseph weeps at the Sight of his Brethren, who knew him not: Gen. 42. V. 24.

ther, ſtruck with juſt remorſe and ſacred horror: in a foreign language, unknown to the guards, they own their unrepented ſin. Joſeph, not yet withdrawn, overhears their language, then haſtes away to hide the guſhing tears.

Oh! we are guilty of our brother's blood, though Heaven withſtood the intended fratricide: with unrelenting hate we ſold the gentle youth to ſome Midianites as a ſlave, for ſordid gold, and it is very likely he may ſerve in bondage as long as he lives. May Almighty God forgive the monſtrous crime! We ſaw the anguiſh of his breaſt, and yet remained unmoved; we ſaw his flowing tears, and mournful looks without emotion; we heard his tender eloquence, and were loſt to nature, virtue, and ſenſe. Such

blooming grace, beauty, and honour, would have ſubdued the moſt wild ſavage race. There can be neither caves nor dungeons horrid enough to hide ſuch monſters. We ſtand condemned, and Heaven is juſtified.

THEN Reuben, who diſclaimed the barbarous fact, blamed their former malice in theſe ſad terms: Would to Heaven that your flowing tears might waſh away the bloody ſtains of that deteſted day; its horror, with eternal grief, I trace in the ſoft impreſſion of my brother's countenance. I view the tragic ſcene, the mournful object is for ever new, and dwells upon my heart. Methinks I ſee the ſurpriſe and anguiſh, and the melting ſorrow that flowed from his lovely eyes, while he kneeled, pleading all the claims of kindred blood; he ſingly

called upon your names, and invoked you one after another. I employed all the power I had to ſave the guiltleſs youth. His goodneſs, and filial love, free from art, made the utmoſt impreſſion on my heart, when he tried to engage your ſoft compaſſion for his drooping father's hoary age. Methinks I hear his cries, while you tied the cruel bands without remorſe around his ſuppliant hands; my ſoul is ſtill wounded with his farewell groan, when you forced him down into the yawning pit.

What helliſh frenzy could fire your boſoms, when you conſpired againſt ſuch youth and virtue? And pray what was his crime? why, a childiſh dream, a viſionary ſcheme of a ſleeping fancy: his blood is now

avenged; our wretched offspring are pining with famine, while we lie confined here.

They own the just reproach of their elder brother, and now address the eternal throne with great humility; they mourn inwardly with sincere penitence, while the tedious day and night return three times.

In the mean time the thoughtful regent in his heart had suppressed the first vindictive motions; he sends early for the Hebrew train, and intends them a great kindness, though he does it in a stern manner; being conducted to his presence, they all fall prostrate, as once their sheaves fell down before his sheaf.

He said, I fear the power that sits above

the ſtars, nor ſhall you find any injuſtice here; therefore to prove that you have no hoſtile aim, nor clandeſtine view, but are true to your honour, you ſhall leave one of your number with the guards as an hoſtage. The captive ſhall remain ſecure from wrong, provided you return at the appointed time: but you muſt for ever expect to be exiles from this place and the fatal coaſts of Egypt, and never hope to ſee my face again, unleſs you bring your youngeſt brother here: let this therefore be a proof of your truth and veracity, or elſe by the ſacred life of Pharaoh you are ſpies.

The ſwains reply, Alas! my lord, thy ſervants ſleep in tents; our humble cares are engroſſed by our bleating ſheep and

herds, no ambitious aims nor martial claims disturb our minds; we are strangers to pompous courts, the tuneful grove and flowery field yielding us their pleasures; we are there secure from noise and strife, and unenvied we spend our peaceful life in humble ease; our constant banquets are made up of nature's simple luxury, in some balmy shade; being distressed with famine, we came to this friendly shore to implore your kind assistance.

After this confession, he dismissed them with full supplies, commanding them to make haste back to their country again. When they arrived at their father's tent, his busy thoughts had presaged some fatal accident; he missed his captive son: to ex-

pel his fears, they tell him the unpleasing truth in soothing words. He hears every circumstance with temper, till his Benjamin was named, the full prop of his declining years; which, in spite of all their well-meant flattering art, wounds his inmost soul with piercing anguish; there is no pleas of reason that can controul its force. His hoary head sunk with sorrow, dejected, on his pensive breast. The careful travellers now untied their sacks, but are greatly surprised when they see their money restored again.

Good Jacob says, what can these mysteries mean? what fatal storm is now breaking over my head? when I am bereft of bliss, why is my life prolonged? Joseph is not; and the only single comfort that I have left you would bear to distant climes;

there to be exiled; these sad events are all against me: but know, before I part with the lovely blooming youth, the flame of life shall quit my heart.

JUDAH replies, content then we must sacrifice our lives, together with our tender wives and offspring; they must be condemned to perish here by famine, for we can never appear again on the coast of Egypt. The mighty ruler of the land, with lifted hand and eyes addressed to Heaven, protested with a solemn grace, that no other proof of our innocence should clear us; and unless we brought our younger brother with us, not one of us should see his face again.

THE anxious parent said, and why did

you make known that needleſs truth, that you had a younger brother? Reuben replies, alas! could we foreſee the conſequence? or had the certainty been known, could we with ſpecious lies diſown the fact? or when we were ſo ſtrictly examined by ſo great a man, could we conceal either our publick or domeſtic ſtate? indeed he talked very roughly, but ſtill there broke ſome ſecret pity through his fierceſt look. However dark the paſt events may appear, we ſurely have nothing to dread from ſuch clemency; whenever he paſſed along in eaſy ſtate, the ſhouting throng echoed his virtues: then why theſe vain delays, my honoured ſire? Paternal cares raiſe a thouſand ſcruples; your Simeon lies unranſomed, a bound ſlave; our time is elapſed, and we are condemned for ſpies: commit to my faithful hand your

darling, and demand the ſacred pledge from me again. I ſhall leave with you as ſureties in his ſtead, two lovely boys, adorned with every grace. If any negligence ſtain my honour, let them both be ſlain without compaſſion.

He now ſtands half yielding, while Judah repeats with artleſs eloquence the ſtraits their houſhold was reduced to. The vanquiſhed patriarch then ſays, with a faultering ſpeech, and anguiſh in his eyes, Go in peace: may celeſtial providence attend your ſteps, and angel guards defend you from every ill; advance doubled money for your corn, it may be that the reſtoration was only a miſtake: alſo take in your hand ſome grateful preſent of the balmy product of your native land. I implore the eternal

majeſty, the ſame God whom my progenitors adored, that you may find favour in the ſight of the ruler, and that your injured innocence may be brought to light: but know, if miſchief ſhould attend the lad, you will ſend my hoary head down with ſorrow to the grave.

THE

HISTORY

OF

JOSEPH.

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

The Hebrews return with their youngeſt brother into Egypt. Joſeph treats them with great kindneſs, and a ſplendid entertainment; but ſtill he conceals his relation to them. At laſt they are diſmiſſed with plentiful ſupplies of corn; but the ſteward, as commanded by his lord, ſecretly conveys a ſilver cup into Benjamin's ſack. After they are gone out of the city, he purſues and charges them with the intended theft; and at laſt he finds it in Benjamin's ſack. They return with great conſternation, when Joſeph diſcovers himſelf to them.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

BOOK X.

THEY take their father's bleſſing on their knees, and now make quick advances to Memphis, where at laſt they arrive ſafe, but are fearful of their doom; they come haſtily to Joſeph's ſteward, and diſcover in humble terms their late miſtake; bringing double money back with them.

He ſaid, your father's God reſtored your coin, you paid it very juſtly; then he introduced them to his lord.

Their gifts they preſent with proſtrate homage, and his generous ſmiles prevent their riſing doubts: forgetful of himſelf, he ſtepped forward with eager haſte, and embraced Benjamin: his heart expands with ſympathetic joy, while he folds the wondering youth in his arms; fond nature ſtruggles with the vain diſguiſe, and he can hardly refrain from diſcovering himſelf: his grandeur ſcarce conceals the truth, being touched with mutual raptures; and the kindred ſoul half appears, till he is obliged to retire to hide his ſwelling tears, that melting love, that excites a ſoft ſurpriſe; but having recollected himſelf, he now re-

turns again, and conducts them to a ſpacious hall, where well-born ſlaves, who are obſequious to the call, inured to luxury, and all the arts of epicuriſm, inſtantly prepare a ſplendid banquet; the ground is covered all over with embroidered carpets, while fragrant ointments ſpread around their odours; the gay attendants, with officious care, bearing ſilver lavers round the circle.

And now the loaded tables ſhine with coſtly fare, and ſparkling wine of various ſorts; beneath a glittering canopy of ſtate, the graceful regent ſat, dreſſed in Tyrian robes; he entertains each Hebrew gueſt nobly: and to compleat their mutual joy, he frees the hoſtage. They take their appointed ſeats in order; ſprightly wines, and gay

ſocial converſe raiſing their ſpirits, they ſpend the fleeting day.

They paſt the night ſupinely in calm repoſe, and riſe with the chearful light of the morning, then haſte away ſtored with full proviſion, and the ſteward, by his lord's command, conveys their coin into their ſacks, and a ſilver cup into that of Benjamin.

The ſteward allows them to paſs the utmoſt bounds of the ſuburbs, when with an anxious haſte, and feigned concern, he overtakes the hindmoſt of the train, and in an angry manner thus accoſts them.

How could you be ſo ungrateful and unjuſt, againſt all the rules of hoſpitable

confidence, combine to ſteal the conſecrated cup by which my lord reveals ſecret things?

Surprised, they cry, what ſtrange meaning is thy language fraught with? we are all guiltleſs, even in thought, and we dare proteſt by the immortal God, that our breaſts are ſtrangers to ſuch black deſigns. We reſtored our coin exactly, unaſked; how ſhould we then abuſe thy injured lord, and baſely ſteal from him gold or ſilver, when recent favours compel our thanks? If ſuch enormous guilt ſtain our boſoms, we are willing to be thy lord's vaſſals for life; and the wretch that is convicted of ſo high a crime, ſhall die unpitied here before thy face.

He ſaid, content, and then began to

ſearch all their burdens; at laſt the cup was found in Benjamin's: they rent their folding veſts with wild deſpair, and back again they go to the royal office, where they find the regent, but oh! they find him changed; he was now no more the mild, beneficent, and kind, but he aſks fiercely, in an altered tone, Pray how could your guilty hands do me ſo much wrong? You might eaſily think, that in a place where dreſs and learning ſo much appear, ſuch a man as me muſt certainly divine.

They all fell proſtrate, while Judah, as ſpeaker for the reſt, expreſſed their mutual grief with mingled ſighs. O how ſhall thy ſervant ſpeak? What can I ſay? in what pathetic words can I break my ſilence? how ſhall I find ſufficient language to ſpeak with

Joseph's Steward, after a dilegent Search, finds the Cup in Benjamin's Sack Gen. 44. V. 12

energy the diſtraction of my mind? Divine juſtice begins with keen revenge to reckon up our lengthned ſcore of ſins: ſecret crimes demand this rigorous ſtroke; we ſtand here thy vaſſals, and ſelf-condemned.

THE generous regent cries, No, only he with whom the cup was found ſhall be my ſlave; your needleſs fears reſign, and return in peace. This youth, being a public criminal, is mine.

JUDAH gently drawing near, ſaid, my lord, be pleaſed to lend a gracious ear, while I inform you of ſome tender circumſtances, and entreat for my father's hoary age. Two lovely boys, who were the pleaſure of his life, and the only offſpring of a

beautiful ſpouſe, the elder of whom, by an untimely death, was ſnatched from his arms, and is long ere now no more; the youngeſt, who now engages all his care, and is the prop of his declining age, and the conſtant theme of every pleaſing thought, has been brought hither by the ſtrict command of your lordſhip: thy ſervant, our ſire, long refuſed to grant this, till, preſſed by meagre want, together with a juſt concern to clear our injured character, he gave the gentle youth to my conduct.

But oh! how his heart was pained with killing anguiſh, when thus compelled to part with Benjamin: I ſtrove to calm his fears with all the eloquence that filial love could inſpire; but all in vain; diſmal foreboding thoughts had taken ſo firm a poſſeſ-

ſion of his ſoul; if miſchief ſhould endanger his blooming life, he ſaid, his hoary head, oppreſſed with grief, muſt deſcend to the gloomy grave for reſt.

And whither ſhall I, unhappy, go, to ſhun this dark diſtracting ſcene of wretchedneſs? I cannot ſee my father's woe, deprived by me of every future joy; for I uſed all the arguments I had to perſuade him, and became myſelf ſurety for the lad; and I muſt either reſtore the precious pledge again, or no more ſee my aged parent's face.

My lord, though you are ſometimes forced to act rigorouſly, yet you ſeem to have a tender heart. O forgive this firſt unfortunate offence, or let thy ſervant live here as a vaſſal to thee, and be a bond ſlave

in my brother's ſtead, condemned no more to tread my native ſoil.

Joseph could no longer controul his tears, or hide the ſoft emotions of his ſoul; the watchful Hebrews ſaw in him ſigns of relenting; he commands in haſte that all his ſervants ſhould withdraw. With tears and melting goodneſs in his eyes, he cries, I am your brother Joſeph, even that brother whom you ſold on Dothan's plain to the Midian merchants; I don't need to tell you the reſt. Alas! they too well knew the cruel fact. They view each other with diſordered looks. He then enquires how his honoured ſire was? A guilty ſhame was now ſpread over every face; they ſtand mute and confuſed, and endeavour to retire to a greater diſtance from him.

Joseph speaks harshly to his Brethren on their being charg'd wth stealing his Cup. Gen. 44. 15.

He ſaid mildly, come near, my brethren, do not reflect ſo ſeverely on yourſelves; it was not you but God that ſent me here; it was he that ruled the circumſtance and the place, to ſave the ſacred race of the ſtock of Abraham; there ſtill remain five years of cruel famine, while the careful ſwain, deſtitute of hope, ſhall neither plow nor reap; The burning ſoil ſhall lye untilled, and mock his fruitleſs toil; but Heaven has ſent me here to ſave your lives, your tender wives, and infant offſpring.

The king of Egypt, great in every virtue, has made me ſecond ruler in the ſtate; and all the ſtrength, power, and wealth of the land are truſted to my hand without reſtraint.

RETURN, and relate these things to my father; tell him of the pomp, plenty, and grandeur that I live in, and that I long to greet his hoary age, and in raptures throw myself at his feet: let him come down, he shall live at Goshen, in a healthful air, and I will take the whole of his domestic charge upon myself.

DISMISS your fears, and break this painful silence! You see a friend, and hear a brother speak. Behold my heart, filled with tender emotions. I am now no longer disguised with art and grandeur: if you observe me well, you will find the prints of nature, and trace the kindred features in my face.

THEN throwing himself round his young

brother's neck, he clasps him round, and no longer strives to check the gushing tears; he throws off all disguise with a friendly ardour, while nature sits triumphant in his eyes; nor is the gentle youth less transported with delight, being replete with truth, innocence, and goodness; their souls are tied in mutual sympathy, and allied more by virtue than by birth.

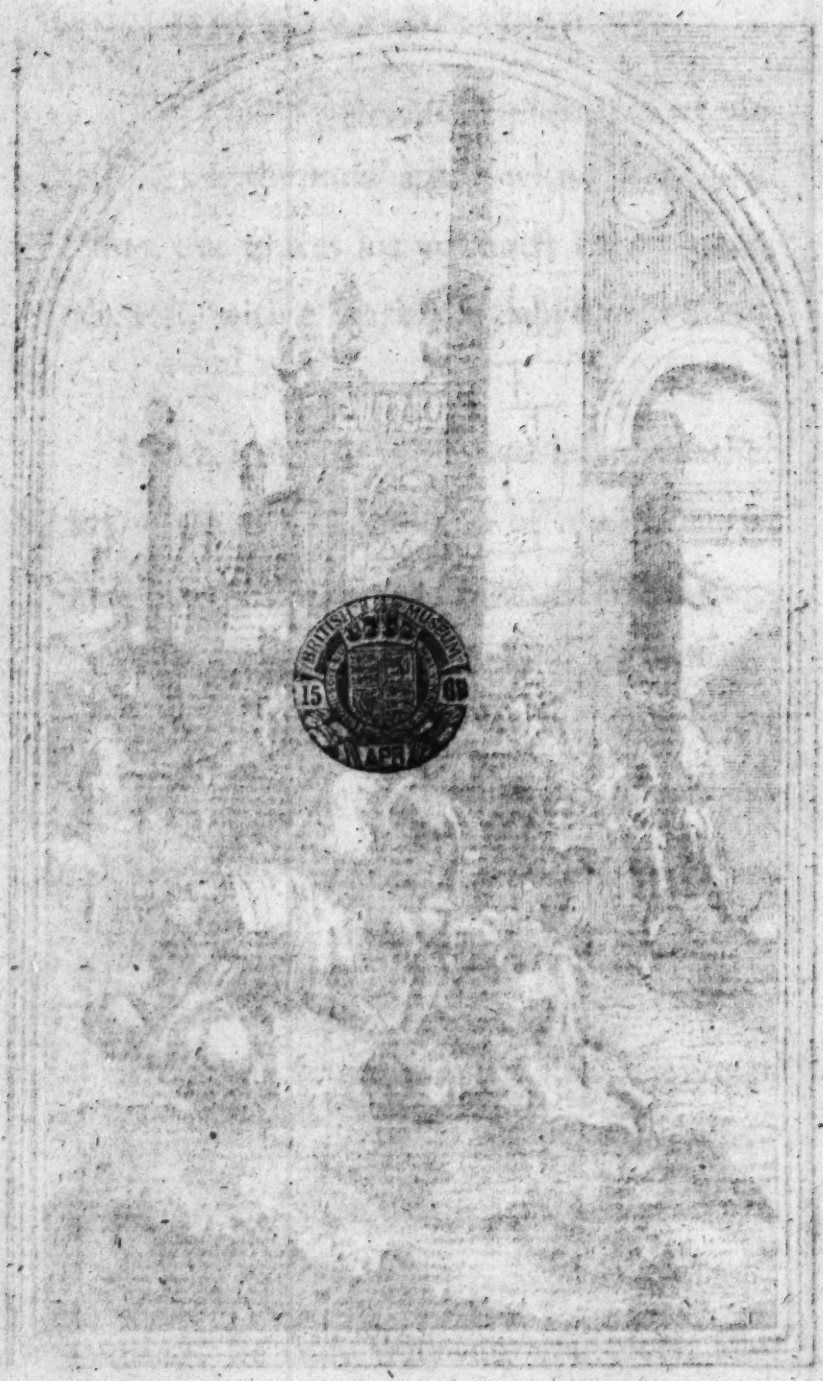
He then with mild address salutes the rest, softens their distress, and clears their doubts; they now quit their fears, and converse freely, while Pharaoh hears the new adventure with pleasure; and in his royal grace, and clemency, commands the viceroy to select some chosen place on Goshen's rich champaign, to entertain his father's numerous charge.

THE regent being now impatient of delay, ſends the men away with coſtly preſents, but graces his youngeſt friend above the reſt, with a ſparkling Babylonian dreſs.

MAKE haſte, he ſaid, and let my father know that I live; tell him of my greatneſs, and bring him down hither. Take waggons, and every thing convenient to bring here your wives and helpleſs children. You don't need to be careful in gathering up your needleſs ſtores, for the wealth of the plenteous land of Zoan is yours.

BY ſpeedy journeys they ſoon arrive at Hebron; the good old man attends their coming. As ſoon as they related the welcome news of the proſperous ſtate of Joſeph, fainting, he ſaid, Why do you mock my

Joſeph *sends by his Brethren rich Presents to his Father in the Land of* Canaan. *Gen.* 45. 23.



woe with airy prospects of gay fantastic dreams? But no sooner do the loaded carriages appear, than his life is recalled, and his drooping spirits cheared.

He cries, My Joseph lives! Transporting truth! I will now contentedly resign these poor remains of breath; I will see his face, and close my aged eyes, gently resting myself in the calm shades of death.

FINIS.

Directions for Placing the Cuts.